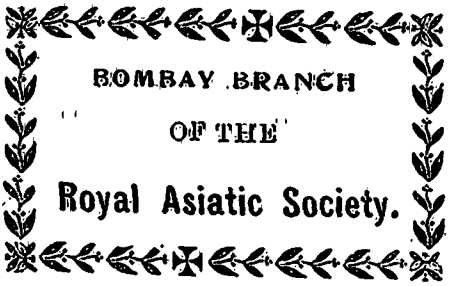
God.
823
Hoo / Fal
88988



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016

FATHERS

AND

SONS.

VOL. II.

1 46

POPULAR NEW NOVELS.

JUST PUBLISHED BY MR. COLBURN.

To be had at all Libraries.

I.

THE MATCH MAKER,

A NOVEL.

By the Author of "Cousin Geoffrey," "The Marrying Man," &c.

3 Vols.

II.

THE PARISH CLERK,

A NOVEL.

By the Author of "Peter Priggins."

EDITED BY THEODORE HOOK, Esq.

3 vols. post 8vo.

III.

THE PIC NIC PAPERS,

BY VARIOUS HANDS.

EDITED BY CHARLES DICKENS, Esq. (BOZ.)

3 vols. post 8vo. illustrated with numerous Plates, by George Cruikshank, Phiz, &c.

"The infinite variety and sterling merit of these singularly entertaining volumes, aided by their numerous and capital illustrations by George Cruikshank, ought at once to command a place for them beside the most popular works of the day."—*Court Journal.*

Also, now ready,

MR. HOOD'S COMIC ANNUAL

FOR 1842.

With 37 Illustrations by the Author and Mr. Leech. Price 12*s.* elegantly bound.

FATHERS AND SONS:

88988

A NOVEL.

BY

THEODORE E. HOOK, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"SAYINGS AND DOINGS," "GURNEY MARRIED," &c. &c.

KX-2.45

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1842.

00088988

LONDON:
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

God
823
Hood Fol

FATHERS AND SONS.

CHAPTER IX.

As we have accompanied what may now almost be considered the "family party" to Greenwich, it would be somewhat tautological to submit to the reader the contents of Jane's letter to her dear Emma, describing the particulars of that excursion; we must wait for Emma's answer, in which we may, perhaps, be enlightened as to her opinions and advice connected therewith.

Sleepy as the graceful yet much bemused George was on the morning after the return he was, soon after two, at Bruff's door; but crossed not the threshold. Of this exclusion the young gentleman bitterly complained, and

Jane was consequently lectured severely by her father; but with that firmness of good purpose, and consciousness of right feeling, which distinguished all her proceedings, she vindicated the order she had given to exclude him, upon her evidently well-grounded objections to receiving his visits, or those of any other man, without the protection and sanction which the presence of a *chaperon* alone could afford. As usual, Bruff sneered at her "nonsense," as he called it, and ended a violent scolding by the assurance that it was no use for her to give herself airs, or evade his determination, for that she should receive and encourage the attentions of Mr. George Grindle; and that if by *her* orders *he* was to be left on the outside of the door, she would soon find herself by *his* orders in a similar position.

"Really, my dear father," said Jane, "I ask nothing extraordinary—I refuse to do nothing which is compatible with the decorum of society and the usages of persons in that class of life to which we belong. I do not feel it right—nay, I cannot consent—to admit a person of Mr. Grindle's avowed cha-

racter and principles, after an acquaintance of three days, to a familiarity which I never yet permitted to those whom I have known much longer, and I may say, liked much better."

"Ah! that'll do," said the colonel; "there it is—'people you have liked much better'—I know it—with all your meekness, and prudence, and wisdom, you have engaged yourself to somebody else."

"My dear father," said Jane, "have I not told you over and over again—"

"Yes," said the colonel; "but I don't believe it—nothing but a previous attachment could blind you to the merits of this fine young fellow—devoted to you—anxious to win your heart—and you order the door to be shut in his face, when he calls to enquire after you."

"I am quite sensible of his kindness," said Jane, "and thankful for his enquiries; but as for his devotion, I must think you are endeavouring to persuade two people into an affection for each other, of which neither of themselves have the slightest idea. Mr.

Grindle was fast asleep during the whole of the way home."

"Well, what then?" said Bruff; "so was I."

"That perhaps is a still stronger fact against *him*," said Jane somewhat archly, and not quite forgetting, even if she had forgiven, the disregard of her, which the nap of Adonis had practically exhibited.

"Well," said Colonel Bruff, "one word is as good as a thousand—I don't mean to hurry on the affair needlessly—and I don't want to force your inclinations; but you must eventually marry George Grindle—it is an affair settled."

"And yet, sir," said Jane, "you do not mean to force my inclinations!"

"No, I do not," replied Bruff; "give George Grindle fair play—see him—talk with him—let him visit us as I wish him to visit us; and I'll swear that at the end of a fortnight, your inclinations towards him will require no forcing."

"Indeed! my dear father," said Jane—

"That'll do—that'll do," interrupted the

gallant and disagreeable officer; "you know when I say a thing I mean it—do you refuse to make the experiment?"

"I should feel myself an exceedingly undutiful child," said Jane, "if I refused to obey you to the utmost extent of my power. I certainly will not insist upon Mr. Grindle's exclusion; but, as a girl brought up and educated with certain notions of delicacy and propriety, I will firmly refuse to admit Mr. Grindle to a succession of morning visits, unless, as I have already said, under the sanction and protection of some female friend."

"That'll do," said Bruff, "perhaps you are right—I'd stay with you myself all the time he was here, but then you wouldn't talk, and he'd think much the same of you as I do. Why don't you ask the Amershams here? She'd play propriety beautifully."

"Their happy home," said Jane, the tears ready to start to her eyes, "is full of friends."

"Full of friends!" said Bruff; "it must be an uncommonly small villa then; besides, if she is such a very particular friend of yours,

they would perhaps throw over the others to oblige you."

"I could not ask or expect such a sacrifice," said Jane.

"Well then," said the colonel, who, although obliged to admit the propriety and validity of Jane's objection, thought it possible to convert his acquiescence into a means of carrying a point which Mrs. Smylar had long urged upon him, of promoting her to the rank of humble companion to his daughter: "well then—would Smylar—that is, mightn't she be in the room, working or—"

"I do not feel," said Jane, "that the association of your housekeeper with your daughter, would tend to increase Mr. Grindle's respect or esteem for a lady, whose fate and fortune he seems determined to share. Indeed, indeed, my dearest father, you had better abandon the design altogether. What the world calls love, in the lover's sense of the word, I have never yet felt; but I know enough of human nature, to know that it never can be compelled. I know, too, that there are certain persons whom I never could love; because the love which I believe to be

the pure and genuine affection whence all happiness is derivable, must be founded on esteem: now really and truly, I never could esteem Mr. George Grindle."

"Oh! never," said the colonel, "never esteem Mr. George Grindle—that'll do—perhaps you could find it in your heart to esteem Mr. Francis Grindle—eh?"

"I might," said Jane; "because, from the little I have seen of either, I prefer his manners and conversation to those of his brother; but the question I want to ask, my dearest father, is, why force me to think of either of them?—a week since I was not aware of their existence; I was living quietly and happily in an agreeable circle, when I am suddenly summoned to—"

"To the dull society of an odious father," interrupted the colonel; "you have made that pleasant and dutiful observation more than once since your return. Now I will tell you why I urge you to see and think of—to love, or if not to love, at least to marry, Mr. George Grindle:—his father and I are agreed on it—you will be settled—titled—well-jointured and comfortable—there can't

be a nicer match—all my care and responsibility, as far as you are concerned, will be over, and I shall be all snug and at ease."

Jane saw before her in this anticipated snugness of her father, the completion of his scheme with the lady whom, in the plenitude of his parental care and delicacy, he had suggested as "the lady in white muslin," to his only daughter; and she felt entirely satisfied that the urgency of the proceeding connected with the sacrifice of her happiness was grounded upon the increasing importunities of Smylar, to induce, perhaps compel the colonel into doing that, which Jane always apprehended he had, in some serious and tangible shape, promised that artful and artificial woman to do,—namely, to quiet the scruples she affected to feel as to "appearances," by marrying her.

"Well," said Bruff, after having walked to the window, and looked out in silence on the stables at the back of the house for a minute or two, "I'll make a bargain with you—you shall not be forced, provided you will give George what I call a fair hearing. Many a time prejudices taken at

first sight have worn off. I have known several couples who have lived for years, 'until death did them part,' comfortably and happy as any people in the world, who began by indifference if not dislike; while, *per contra*, I have seen half a score love-matches turn out dead failures, and as many more elopements, which ended in the lady's running away *from* the man, whom she had in the first instance run away *with*."

"Whatever may be my personal feelings or convictions," said Jane,—"and after having expressed them, I do not feel that I have any right to refuse what you now ask me,—as friends of yours, I consider it my duty to receive any persons you may select, and therefore upon the conditions for which I stipulate, I shall of course not object to Mr. Grindle's visits; but unless those conditions are granted, I must refuse to obey."

Whether the propriety and reasonableness of his daughter's stipulation made their own effect upon the colonel, or whether Mrs. Smylar, who either might have anticipated the suggestion, or heard of Jane's feelings upon the point through Miss Harris, had ad-

vised him to concede the point, we cannot venture to guess; but certainly the gallant and disagreeable officer received his daughter's ultimatum, and did not answer hastily—nor did he swear—in fact he listened to her, and when she had done, contracted his brows, compressed his lips, and threw what he imagined a "considering" expression into his unmeaning countenance. After a pause, he said,

"Well—but—then supposing—that—who could you get to come and stay with you?—I ask nothing unreasonable—perhaps you are right—eh?"

"Town is so empty, one has no great choice of acquaintances," said Jane; "and so dull, that one scarcely dare venture to invite any body into it."

And then they held council. Various persons were suggested; but one was at Leamington, another at Harrowgate, a third at Carlsbad, and so on, until the consultation terminated with the resolution of asking Miss Pheezle to pass a few days with her "young friend." Miss Pheezle, odious to everybody except when her little services in the way of

chaperoning and accidental appointment-makings were required, was particularly disagreeable to Jane; but there seemed no alternative, and as Jane had made her conditions, and they had been acceded to, she felt bound to fulfil her part of the contract; and accordingly a sweet-smelling, shining, and aptly-embossed note was despatched to the blue bore, as the wags called her, soliciting in gentle phraseology, the *pleasure* of her company for a few days. So goes the world! As for the answer, Miss Pheezle's character was too well known to render its tenour in the slightest degree doubtful. She was known, in spite of all her failings, to be a most attaching person—that is to say, she would fasten herself upon any body who gave her the slightest hint that way, and had only quitted her dear friend Lady Gramm that morning, because her ladyship was going on a visit to some friends in the country. This was a happy coincidence, and Miss Pheezle did not hesitate to avail herself of it; and accordingly, in reply, expressed the great happiness she should feel in accepting Miss Bruff's kind invitation.

So far then has propriety been satisfied, and Jane, in one respect, conciliated. Besides which, the colonel announced his intention of dining at home every day, for the purpose of receiving Sir George and his son, or his son alone, varying the society when he was able, by the introduction of other occasional visitors.

He now considered matters *en train;* and uncongenial as were the feelings of Jane and her coming companion, she felt more at ease in the prospect of an associate; for, besides having the effect which she so judiciously and properly intended it should have, it would rid her of the conversation of Mrs. Smylar, who, although her intrusions had been, since Jane's return to London, less frequent than before, still was in the habit of conversing with her in a manner which Jane could neither check nor correct, but which gave her considerable uneasiness.

The history of the next few days presented nothing very remarkable. George generally passed an hour or two in Jane's society; sometimes he came to luncheon, retiring when she ordered the carriage, and returning

to dinner. Miss Pheezle pronounced him a "delightful creature," and Jane gradually, as time flew, or rather (with her) lagged, began to find her first impressions daily strengthen, and her first feelings of dislike towards him confirm themselves in her mind; as indeed, if he had any perception, or rather if he had chosen to see things as they were, he could not have failed to discover. Still the fathers proceeded systematically in canvassing and considering the best arrangements; and although there did not appear the smallest increase of approximation between the principals, it was evident that the elders looked upon it as a settled thing.

Under these conflicting circumstances, and entertaining not the most affectionate regard for Miss Pheezle, and feeling an instinctive dread of Mrs. Smylar, whose *tone* upon the subject she could have no great difficulty in anticipating, Jane had but one friend and counsellor. In Emma Amersham she naturally reposed perfect confidence; upon her judgment, she placed implicit reliance. The following letter from her in answer to one or two, the contents of which, knowing her

feelings and opinions, we can easily imagine, will serve to show her views of the case, which she held to be one of the greatest hardship. Little did poor Jane fancy the wretchedness which another being, who really loved the object of her dislike, was doomed to suffer by the completion of the scheme which was to ensure her own misery.

"Dear Jane,

"Your two last letters have caused me very great uneasiness. Surely your father will not thus rashly, and I must say harshly, insist upon this match! What can he expect from such compulsion? As you justly say in your letter of Tuesday, if you were in bad circumstances, or in a doubtful position in society, the precipitation with which the colonel seems to be acting might be, in some degree, justified; but as *you* are situated, where can be the necessity of forcing your inclinations with regard to any particular person, or indeed of driving you into marriage at all?

"You tell me that this Mr. Grindle is odious to *you*, although he is what is called

an extremely popular person in some circles. You admit that he is good-looking, has seen a good deal of the world, and although his conversation is superficial and frivolous, it is not altogether unentertaining. These admissions, Jane, go a considerable way to induce me to think that somebody more intellectual, more agreeable, and more accomplished has obtained possession—if not of your heart—at least of your very particular friendship; which with *me*, having no faith in Platonics, nearly approaches a feeling and sentiment which, to a young lady in your peculiar position, it might not be right or prudent to name.

"You speak somewhat glowingly of the brother, Francis; but dear Jane, if I know you as well as I think I do, the duration of your acquaintance with him has not been sufficiently long to fix your affections, or even your thoughts, in that quarter, especially as you tell me he is gone abroad, or somewhere —you not having the courage, as you say, to ask whither. This, I confess, is odd, and symptomatic of a sensitiveness which is natural to love. Still, if he is really gone, you

must have had fewer opportunities of judging of his merits, than have been afforded you of considering the qualities of the brother. How is this, Jane?

"As for the subject of my constant anxieties, Miles Blackmore—don't be angry at my mentioning his name—he leaves us on Thursday. You have a great deal to answer for;—he is going, he says, to the continent, but I think he scarcely knows what his destination is to be. I really disclaim all desire to excite any mutinous or rebellious feeling in your bosom; but since you have been gone, his anxiety, his silence, his almost sullenness have gradually increased, and the only sounds in which he seems to take delight, are those of the chords with which you ended that beautiful song of Moore's—

'Has sorrow thy young days shaded?'

Rely upon it, Jane, you are making a martyr of a man who deserves to live and confer happiness on her whom he loves, and who would reciprocate his affection. Why not, my dear girl, tell your father at once the state of your heart?—why not admit *that*

which I know to be true? It is said that from your lawyer, or your physician, you should conceal nothing; from your father, under such circumstances as yours, concealment would be equally fatal. Shall I be the negociator?—Give me powers—let me begin with a protocol by return of post. Do not sacrifice your happiness for ever on earth to any hesitation or fear. Rely upon it the colonel, with such a prospect, and with such a son-in-law, would yield to your wishes—why should he not?

"You tell me that you believe his object is to get you married and out of the way, without considering too much the character of the young gentleman who is to receive you in his arms. The title you think an object—how very absurd! In fortune, I am sure that Miles Blackmore ranks before Mr. Grindle or his father. Let me persuade, let me entreat you, be candid—make one bold move, and do upon this occasion what you invariably do upon all others—tell the truth.

"I know, my dear Jane, what you patiently endure, living entirely with an austere father,

full of military prejudices, and imbued with the strongest possible idea of implicit obedience to his commands; and I can quite understand that under this *régime*, a sharp word, or a scowling look from the colonel, is quite sufficient to awe you into silence and submission. But do consider how different this case is. A father has a perfect right to watch over his daughter—over her conduct—over her intercourse with the world; and if he sees, or thinks he sees her falling into the snares of men unsuited by rank or fortune to her position or circumstances, no doubt can be entertained that he is wise in checking her in a career which, with all its blandishments, might prove eventually ruinous. But your case is wholly different. Thrown more immediately under his *surveillance* by the early loss of your mother, I can perfectly account for that timid, shrinking manner which characterizes your conduct while in his presence, and even for the readiness which, to a certain extent, you have already evinced in the present affair, to meet his views. But there *is* a time when this passive obedience should be qualified; and

that time has now arrived. If you had, in spite of his iron-bound dominion—the likeliest course in the world to have drawn you to it—fixed your affections upon such a person as I have just supposed, you might dread a confession, and even go to the altar with a broken heart, rather than risk the displeasure of an arbitrary parent. But you have done no such thing;—the man who—mark my words, Jane—who loves you—who is devoted to you—happy only in your presence, and miserable now you are away—is a gentleman—a gentleman of fortune—and if he have not a title—which, as I have over and over again told you, at least in sound, may be obtained by presenting a city address, and sometimes by fraud, quackery, or chicanery—has a heart and mind to love and cherish his wife, and place her, as the source of his pride and the cause of his happiness, in the very best sphere of society. Can you hesitate for a moment?

"I know what you will answer—that Miles Blackmore has never given you any reason to suppose yourself an object of interest in his eyes—that he has shunned you at some

times when you fancied he might have sought you, and that when opportunities have offered at table, and in the evenings, for his entering into conversation with you—and you know, Jane, how much you enjoyed his conversation—he sat near you—next you—and remained silent, or merely confining himself to dull commonplaces; apparently, as you have said, unwilling even to look at you. Oh! Jane, Jane, innocent as you are, you know that these are all marks of deep and settled affection—of a devotion wholly unlike the superficial flatteries or gaieties of worldly men. Jane, I *know* he loves *you*. Be candid. Tell me—*me*, your second self—what are really *your* feelings towards *him?* No time is to be lost—you are on the edge of a precipice. It seems as if a few days would seal your fate. Three days terminate his visit here. Why should he leave us? He was engaged for six weeks to us. But he goes. He hears of your protracted stay from us, and although I 'named no names,' as the old gentlewomen say, I hinted at the cause of your absence, and then abruptly ends his visit.

"For *him*, Jane, I will pledge myself—what

say *you?* Only tell me—only accredit me as your minister—and I will undertake to upset all the Grindle treaty in three days.

"I never saw your *chaperon* but once, and I own I then thought her odious. The mere fact of an ugly old woman fancying herself handsome and young, is, as times go, really nothing; nor does such a delusion at all annoy one. But when such a woman turns authoress, and inflicts poetry upon us, and goes the whole length of repeating herself, it is more than mortal can endure. However, you were perfectly right in your resolution about your morning visiters, and I have no doubt she thinks so.

"Now let me beg of you to write by return of post, and tell me what I may say, and what I may do; for I shall not sleep till I am in 'office.'

"Our party is getting thinner. I told you of the ball, which turned out excessively dull —at least I was dull, and probably thought every body was in the same humour. The great House was particularly gracious, and we were all invited, *en masse*, to a sort of *déjeûner dinatoire* on Thursday; and there

was archery; and the two girls from Hastford were exceedingly smart, dressed in green, with hats, and feathers, and quivers, and all the paraphernalia of toxopholitism (if there be such a word); and Grace—as the ugly one is called—won a gold bracelet by hitting the target accidentally, and was carried about in triumph. As for Jemisetta, the younger sister, who shot as they said second best, it seemed to me that she thought more of the *beaux* than the arrows. Forgive my pun, which you will no doubt despise. It pleased my husband, who has repeated it with as much zest as if it were new.

"But now, Jane—to conclude—do what I ask—what I command—and let me hear instantly. Mark my last words—do not marry to break your own heart, especially when by so doing you will break the heart of another!

"Yours affectionately,

"EMMA.

"My husband desires his kindest regards. Mr. Miles Blackmore, who is at my elbow, begs to be *particularly* remembered."

Now, what the gentle Jane Bruff said in

answer to this, we are not yet able to inform the reader, because certain circumstances necessarily intervene which carry him to the cottage on the Regent's Park bank, whither he has not been conveyed for some eight or ten days.

If the reader bears in mind the sweetness of Ellen's character,—or, as he may best remember her by George's familiar appellation of Nelly,—the acuteness of her feelings, the peculiarity of her position (and of that he yet knows little), he must be perfectly sure that the continued, or rather continuous absence of George from her once happy domicile, could not fail to keep alive—ay, and in living agony—the anxiety which the dialogue already recorded in these pages first excited. Day passed after day, and to be sure George visited her, and his once darling boy; but not once had he dined there, as was his wont, especially at that season of the year. If he slept "at home," as he had always called it, till within a few short days, his rest was disturbed, and although strong drinks were called, unusually for him, into play, to induce sleep, he would wake, and in his half-living,

half-dreaming state, words incoherent and incomprehensible by the watchful, wakeful Ellen, would pass his lips. Now and then an oath was muttered, and then came a deep-drawn sigh. Fallen as he was,—or rather falling,—he could not break such ties as those which bound him to Ellen, without some compunctious visitations.

The dear, innocent, deluded girl—yes, reader, innocent and deluded; and here you may pause to wonder.—Rely upon it Ellen is an object fitted to attract your tenderest affections—to excite your deepest interest—and in spite of all appearances, you may indulge in the kindliest feelings of esteem, of sympathy, and of sorrow for her fate, without violating in the slightest degree the strictest propriety of the moral world:—and herein lies the mystery of Ellen.

The dear, innocent, deluded girl, we say, saw the misery and excitement of him who to her was dearest—the first and only love of her heart—the father of her darling boy. She traced all his feverish restlessness to his new addiction to drinking at night; to his losses at play; and to the austerity of his

father, the partner and accomplice of his vice. The idea—even after the conversation we have formerly witnessed, as to her temporary removal to the continent—that they were on the eve of eternal separation, and that for the sake of another woman—preferred from mercenary motives—never took root in her mind. And yet, considering that George had a good many friends who admired the beautiful Ellen, and who might have found opportunities for communicating the real facts to her, it is somewhat strange that in this age of excessive refinement and purely disinterested friendship, none of his own "particular and immediate" cronies had, for obvious reasons, let her into the secret. So it was, however, and within what the parties most deeply concerned considered a fortnight of his marriage with Miss Jane Bruff, Ellen believed herself the only beloved object of her dear George, and her heart bled to think that she was the cause of the variance which he taught her to think existed between him and his exemplary father.

"Are we to go to France?" said Ellen at breakfast, from which the child, as it had

always been during his later visits, was excluded.

"*You* must, Nelly," said George, "and I have written to mamma to say so. But I don't see how I can lift *myself* over. Only you are so particular about going alone."

"No, George," said Ellen, "I am *not* particular. You know you have only to say you wish it, and I will do it; but I confess I should prefer returning to my mother under your care. I could so much better explain the reasons why I was forced for a time to part from you."

"Ha, ha," said George, swinging himself backwards and forwards in his chair, "and do you think it is worth my going all that way to vouch for the explanation? Mamma will believe you, Nelly, whether I am there or not. However, don't cry about it—I dare say we shall manage it somehow."

"Oh, George! dear George!" said Ellen, "you did not use to speak so of my dear mother, in other days. What has she, or what have I done to cause this change in your manner?"

"Nothing, dear," said George, "nothing—

only you see—I don't quite comprehend what is best for us—being, as I have already said, entirely stumped; and the governor, as usual, looking uncommon blue. I don't quite calculate the means for my trip to Paris; or, as I said when I first hinted it, how I shall get there and back again without being missed? However, I suppose it must be."

"Then," said Ellen, "hadn't I better begin to make preparations?"

"Wait a day or two, Nelly," said George, who, in all probability, had knowledge of the world, and perception enough to induce him to mistrust the entirety of his success with Jane; "it may be, my dear girl, that we shan't have to flit at all, as they say in Scotland—only to be sure it's best to be ready."

To this readiness the gentle Ellen had long pledged herself; but since the first blush of his proposition, several, to *her* sad tedious days had passed, during which she had seen but little of him, until, with all the worst forebodings of some coming evil upon her mind, the agonies of suspense were even more torturing than the actual infliction of

the blow which he had prepared her to expect.

"When, dearest George," said she, "when will you know to a certainty the course it will be best to pursue?"

"That's it," said George, "that's the puzzle—and when I do know—then how to manage it. Sometimes I think it would be a good plan to let the governor into the whole history, and bring him here to dine with us. I know you'd like him,—he is a capital chap in every way but one,—I mean as a father,—in regard of that, he is a regular screw—but he is a boy, for his age, deucedly fond of children. Who knows but he might take a fancy to Tiney, and do something for him as he grows up? As for you—I know he'd be delighted with you; but then—'gad, I don't see—"

"How truly happy," said the innocent Ellen, "should I be if such a reconciliation should take place!—how our hearts and minds would be relieved!—we might contribute to *his* happiness, and his sanction would secure *ours*. There would be an end

to our mysterious, restless life, and we should be received and acknowledged in the world. I should make an excellent daughter-in-law, George," added she, smiling.

"Yes," said George, drawing his hand across the lower part of his face to conceal the sarcastic sneer that curled his lip. "You have settled it uncommon well, Nelly; but you are going ahead a little too fast—I don't think the governor would stand that exactly."

"I only spoke as you directed my thoughts," said Ellen. "You gave me hopes of the possibility of a reconciliation."

"Why, yes," said George again, his mind being evidently occupied with some new, and probably to *her*, unmentionable project; "but not exactly in that manner—however, a week at furthest will set the question at rest; and rely upon it, old lady, your interests are nearest my heart—whatever happens, all shall go well with you."

"Bless you, George—dearest George!" said the devoted girl, seizing his hand and covering it with her kisses.

Her warmth of kindness caused an involuntary shudder through George's frame.

Callous as he was, could he see such a return of implicit confidence to calculating hypocrisy, without trembling even at his own duplicity?—Resolved as he was at the moment of that endearment, to cast off for ever the dupe of his artifices, and the victim of his villany, the force of nature could not withstand the shock of such an appeal. She saw the emotion but mistook the cause, and pitied her destroyer in proportion to her love for him.

"Stay here to-day, George," said Ellen; "you have not dined at home for eight days—there is nobody in town to keep you so much engaged."

—"Yes," said George, "my father—my father is in town."

"But your brother is in town too," said Ellen.

"No—he is not," answered George, "he is gone somewhere, I don't exactly know where. Besides, if he were, he is no society for the governor, who is detained in London by some law business with an old colonel somebody, and gets bored to death, and would die without me. But I shall be home early in the

evening, and perhaps shall be able to tell you more about his conditions concerning me and my arrangements."

"Is your friend, Mr. Ashford, gone to France?" said Ellen.

"Started the day before yesterday," said George. "I thought he had made a hit with you, Nelly—deuced fine fellow! When I write I shall tell him that you asked after him."

"I asked after him," said Ellen, "in hopes of hearing the news of him which you have given me. I know he is your friend, and exactly such a friend of yours as I should wish to avoid. He being gone, my journey to Versailles, if you consider it must be made, loses half its terrors."

"He is a formidable creature!" said George.

"Don't let us talk about him, George," replied Ellen; "I hope with all my heart I may never see him again."

"*Cela dépend*," said George, "if he should pitch his tent at Versailles, you may meet; and I don't think, unless you give him a very bad character indeed, mamma will shut her

door against him, for wherever he goes he takes the lead."

"Perhaps," said the poor girl, looking intently in George's face, "perhaps the day may never come."

It were useless to keep the reader longer witness to this scene of confidence and duplicity, which was protracted after the return of Tiney with his maid from their walk, until it was time for George to get home and dress for dinner at his intended father-in-law's.

During the course of that morning, Sir George, whose anxiety for dispatch in the negotiation between himself and Bruff was considerably whetted by the progressive urgency of claimants upon his attention in the way of pecuniary engagements, and who had for himself and his son already done every thing that could be done in the way of protracting, appeasing, and even in some instances commuting and compounding, had pressed upon the colonel the wisdom of bringing affairs speedily to a crisis—at least as far as an expression of Jane's sentiments was concerned. The colonel was as desirous

as Sir George, but doubted whether it would not be wiser to let the acquaintance between Jane and her lover continue a little longer, pledging himself to the peremptory exercise of his paternal authority if she eventually refused her consent, and expressing his unalterable resolution, that she should marry as he chose, even if she were dragged to the altar.

To this exceeding violence of resolve, the colonel had been stimulated by Mrs. Smylar, whose determination to get rid of Jane, at all hazards, the reader has before seen, but who now felt armed with a double power, by a course of conduct which she had laid down for her own observance, and which, when the time arrived for its development, would place the innocent Jane in a position she could never have anticipated, and without some almost miraculous interference, bring about the consummation of Mrs. Smylar's scheme by one of two means scarcely yet imaginable by the reader.

It was on this same day when two or three moves were made by the Elders in the Harley-street game of matrimonial chess, that Jane answered the letter which she had received

from Mrs. Amersham, and which the reader has already seen. As the most illustrious woman of her day once said, when advocating judicial impartiality, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," and upon her most "wise and upright" principle, it seems that as Mrs. Amersham's letter to Emma has been subjected to the public eye, so no good reason exists why Jane's answer to Mrs. Amersham should not be submitted in a similar manner. Here it is.

"Harley-street,
——, 18—.

"My dear Emma,

"Your letter has cheered and alarmed me. As you too truly say, my position is perilous; and, as you know, I have nobody here to confide in or trust to. But, dearest Emma, you are wrong—completely and entirely wrong in attributing my fixed—yes, fixed and unalterable, at least as I now feel and think—objection to the proposed match, to any predilection for *your* friend Mr. Miles Blackmore.

"Surely, as I have said a thousand times

to you upon this subject, it is quite possible for a woman to admire talent, and be pleased with wit, edified by wisdom, and charmed with accomplishments in a man, without necessarily being in love with him. Men seem to me to think not, and hence the great difficulty to young women in expressing feelings, either verbally or practically, by associating with and enjoying the society of men whom they really do esteem, and are delighted with as companions, without the slightest combination in their feelings of what is called love, and which I do not remember ever to have felt.

"You do an equal injustice, rely upon it, to poor Mr. Blackmore. You attribute—after your fashion, dearest—to a deep-rooted affection, and the diffidence which true love imparts, what I consider perfect indifference in the way of love. Taking his feelings upon your own principle, I am fully prepared to admit, in the plenitude of my vanity, that Mr. Miles Blackmore is interested about me—nay, I am sure he is. I believe that he would do me any service which might lie in his power—I go the whole length even of

imagining that he would jump into a river to save me from drowning, or hazard life and limb in an attempt to stop my runaway horse. But all this is, I am sure, not connected with love. I hope so, sincerely, Emma, for with all my regard and esteem for Miles Blackmore, I never could—no never—accept him as a husband.

"As he is the dearest friend of Mr. Amersham, and consequently, I presume, a great favourite of yours, I shall say much less than I feel upon that point; but I must just record my opinion that there is something preying on his mind—some mystery—which, let it be ever or never discovered, renders him to me, as I have over and over again told you, an object—I can scarcely say of distrust—but of something like apprehension. Let it be what it may which interests me,—and I do not deny the interest,—it is as little like love, if love be what I think it to be, as you can with all your superior knowledge possibly imagine.

"But this is, as you will easily perceive, a secondary consideration. You speak of my doing that which I have no inclination—no

intention—no power to do. What I return and recur to is the conduct I *must* inevitably pursue, and that within a very short time, with regard to Mr. George Grindle. It is here that I seek your advice. It is quite clear now, that this man, for some reason—what, as you most properly ask in your letter, I cannot at all comprehend—is to be my husband. The fate seems inevitable, and I do assure you that with the most perfect and ineffable contempt for his character, his principles, and his pursuits, death would be preferable!

"How strange is it, dear Emma, that men do not appear to sympathize with us in feelings of this sort! A man, if he marries a pretty girl who accepts him, she scarcely knows why, except that she is asked, makes up his mind to love her, and, I suppose, does love her, probably because she is handsome, or for some other reason equally good. But a woman—at least I speak for myself, and I am a woman now—looks to the man she marries for a companion whom she can attach to herself—whose interests are her own, and to whom it will be her duty as well as in-

clination, to afford every comfort, and, even counsel if required. On the contrary, a man like this Mr. Grindle, comes prepared to be accepted, evidently scorning all advice, and wholly insensible to the only permanent attractions of a wife. In fact, Emma, with all his pretensions he is a fool—there's the truth.

"His brother Frank, of whom I have before written to you, improved upon acquaintance; in truth he was the only redeeming point of our Greenwich dinner; but he has left town. He seems, as I before told you, full of intelligence and accomplishment; but he neither has, nor will have, a title, for which, all at once, my dear extraordinary father appears to have taken a most desperate liking. Never mind, Emma—let what may happen, upon one thing I *am* resolved—I will *not* marry Mr. George Grindle. This sounds bold and rebellious, as far as my father is concerned. But I have tried, I have struggled to try and like him, and I cannot. Nor can the dreadful wrigglings of old Miss Pheezle, our poetess, who looks like an ill-kept mummy just emancipated from its ill-made case, induce me to consider him more

favourably; although he, fancying that because she is here as *chaperon* she has some influence over me, is exceedingly kind to her, and permits her to repeat some of her wretched verses, which have appeared during the last month in a low magazine.

"Sir George, with whom we dined yesterday, is quite a different person from his son. Looking not much older, and, as I before told you, full of anecdote and playful conversation, he is greatly his superior in every attraction. Why Frank Grindle left town I have never been able exactly to ascertain. He told me something of an invalid friend at Leamington. Nobody speaks of him. He is gone—and—I know, dear Emma, you will laugh at me—I never have courage to ask any body about him. But I do *not* think he is at Leamington. Perhaps you will say, why should I care about him at all? I can scarcely answer the question. But probably the interest I feel has been created by the compulsory course pursued by my father, and the effect of the contrast produced by the introduction of the two brothers.

"Now, then, dearest Emma, comes *the*

question. I have admitted the difficulty of my position as you exhibit it to my eyes—I peremptorily and decidedly deny—(and recollect, dear girl, this is between ourselves, unheard and unseen except by Him who sees and knows all things)—any, the slightest feeling of what I consider love for Miles Blackmore. Now then, how am I to act?—what am I to do? These are the questions I ask. I tell you I am sure that my father's intentions are to force my inclinations. Do I distress—do I annoy—do I pain you by simply begging you to give me advice?

"If I were to write to you and tell you that I was half driven to madness by the advent of the storm, I should write nonsense—it is no such thing. I look at the whole plan and design with the full stock of common sense and reason which God has given me. Advice as to the means of avoiding certain misery is, I confess, that which I want.

"Pray remember that my notion is, that a deep,—a much deeper plot than you may anticipate, or I comprehend, is at work. Mrs. Smylar does nothing but smirk. She courtesies to me, but abstains from conversation,

is exceedingly civil to my mummy poetess, and I think has obtained an influence over my maid. Rely upon it that I am somehow surrounded and hemmed in; but rely upon it also, dearest Emma, that I will *not* marry George Grindle.

"They talked yesterday evening of jewels, and Sir George whispered something to Miss Pheezle, which sounded to my ears like 'Corbeille,' but she said nothing on the subject to me. Not that that signifies much; for if she fancied it suited her interests more to deceive me and lead me into any snare, she is just the creature who would do it. And yet, thanks to my poor father's primitive notions, she is the person I am obliged to select, to act the part of a mother, whose love and protection I never had the happiness of knowing.

"Write to me, dearest friend. Do tell me how best to avoid eternal misery; but above all, reject from your mind every thing connected with Mr. Miles Blackmore and myself.

"Of course it would be useless at this time of the year to press my father's invitation

upon you, to come to town. The grass is literally growing on the shady side of Cavendish square, and why should you leave your dear happy home? Do not fail to write to me, and give my best regards—and, if *you* please, my kindest *love*—to your husband.

"Yours affectionately,

"JANE BRUFF."

Here come we to a plain, unvarnished, and confidential denial on the part of Jane, of any tender feeling towards the man whom she considers the "mysterious" Miles Blackmore; the reader, therefore, can have no doubt of *her* sincerity. But it does not quite follow as a matter of course, that the deep interest which Mrs. Amersham thinks, and we firmly believe, is entertained by Miles Blackmore in all Jane Bruff's proceedings, is so easily to be gotten rid of; all that is matter for after consideration and subsequent development. What seems up to this point of our history alone certain is, that however much Miles Blackmore might have engaged Jane's attention, however much he might have awakened the sympathy, however much he

might have chained her ear, or charmed her mind, he had not touched her heart. To *that* point we have traced her; but much may follow which will place the charming, unsophisticated, amiable, innocent Jane in positions where Miles Blackmore may show himself somewhat differently in his bearing towards her. "'Tis a mad world, my masters," says the title of an old play; and our fair and gentle Jane was destined to prove the truth of the apophthegm thus dramatically adopted.

But now as to Frank. He had absented himself from London. His Leamington friend had surprisingly recovered after Jane's bidding to Greenwich, and what it was that took him from London he could himself scarcely tell. He went, however; and as Jane admitted, she had not the courage to inquire whither. Frank was not blind to the perfections of Jane, or insensible of the impression he had artlessly and unintentionally made upon her. The Leamington history was changed for some other, after that brief and almost wordless interview in the Greenwich balcony, and Frank, mild, unassuming, and almost oppressed as he was, retired from

the field—no one knew whither—at a time when his presence might have in some degree interfered with the action which was about to commence, and in which he felt it but too clear, he was to take no decided part.

During these proceedings in London, Mrs. Amersham consulted her husband, as far as she held it prudent, or indeed consistent with her estimation of that gentleman's intellectual qualities, touching the course he would recommend Jane to pursue; breaking to him only so much of the business in hand as she thought necessary, and putting wholly out of the question, in the present discussion, Mr. Miles Blackmore,—who, strange to say,—and here come the wheels within wheels,—had always been considered a very great admirer of Mrs. Amersham herself. So goes the world, or as it is genteelly said, *ainsi va le monde.* Because Blackmore was Mr. Amersham's most intimate friend, and because Mrs. Amersham cherished the intimate friend of her husband, and treated him like a brother for her husband's sake,—the dearest of Mrs. Amersham's friends—in what may be called the acceptation of ordinary society—found out

that Mrs. Amersham was exceedingly particular in her attentions to Mr. Miles Blackmore; indeed, every body, except Amersham himself, who knew his wife and her admirable qualities too well to entertain the slightest suspicion of the honesty of her friendship, or the purity of her mind, began to whisper, and wink, and make signs, and faces, whenever Miles Blackmore was selected to escort Mrs. Amersham to table, or to the ball-room, or indeed to practise any of the innocent and inevitable manœuvres of pairing-off (which are generally supposed not to be of the negative character which distinguishes a joint parliamentary exit under the same term); and accordingly some starched ladies wondered how Mr. Amersham could suffer *that* Mr. Blackmore so constantly in his house, and were quite confounded at the way in which Mrs. Amersham sometimes looked at him while listening to his conversation.

Now, here we have shown the contemptible absurdity of this scandal, which her neighbours and friends—ay, *friends* living in her own house with her—concocted. Here we have this excellent woman pressing upon her

dearest *protégée*, the affections of this very Mr. Miles Blackmore; most naturally too, because Mrs. Amersham was in point of fact, by her mother's side, the nearest living relative our beautiful Jane had. Is not this enough, and more than enough, to silence the shameful, or rather shameless clamours which an opposite faction in the county had endeavoured to raise against Jane's best friend, and exhibit under her own hand an uncalled-for proof, and certainly an unpremeditated one, of her truth and sincerity?

Amersham, who to do him justice, or rather to do him no injustice, was no conjurer, but, as we have already depicted him, an exceedingly agreeable fellow, whose fortune placed him in the happy position of making his house agreeable, furnished above all things with a most charming wife,—was not exactly the man to advise in any emergency, especially where an affair turned upon a delicate point; a difficult one he might have mastered, but a delicate one was as far beyond his powers, as the construction of a chronometer is above the capacity of a Dutch clock-maker. He had what is called

plain sense; he was that sort of living anomaly known as an "upright, downright, straightforward man"—a character scarcely reducible to the ratio of any practical art or science. But when his wife simply stated that Colonel Bruff proposed to marry Jane to somebody—no matter whom—against her will, Amersham exclaimed in a tone not to be described, and in words not to be written in these days of refinement, "I'll be *hanged* if he shall!"

Thus, as far as the principle went, at least, Emma had secured her husband's co-operation, and that was delightful to her. She fully appreciated the goodness of his heart, and rejoiced to find that she should have him, "with her" in the remonstrating line against the colonel.

It was a curious coincidence, as people say, that on the very day following this discussion, sooner too than he meant to go, as we have seen by Emma's letter to Jane, Mr. Miles Blackmore announced his determination to take his departure; so that all the kindly efforts of Mrs. Amersham to awaken, what she firmly believed a sympathetic feel-

ing in Jane's heart touching Blackmore, were unavailing: before Jane's letter arrived at the villa, Miles was gone.

All this looked odd, strange, and if we were romantically inclined, might conjure up very odd surmises. Alas! in these days of iron railroads, and steam-engines, romance perishes; as the advertisements in the newspapers say, time and space are annihilated, not to speak of a very considerable number of the passengers who avail themselves of the infernal machinery. Still romance is gone, fallen, never to rise again; and our mysterious friend, Mr. Miles Blackmore, before the arrival of Jane's repudiation, much to Mrs. Amersham's horror, had taken his departure by a railroad, the nearest station of which was conveniently situated within seven miles of Amersham's lodge-gates.

It is scarcely possible to describe the feelings which affected Emma Amersham, as Miles Blackmore quitted the house. Her agitation was evident, more especially to those dear friends who had previously made their observations upon her "particular" attentions to him. *Her* object was to have kept him

at the villa till she received Jane's answer to her letter; but he was inexorable, and the moment he heard Amersham and his wife discussing the matrimonial scheme, which was to involve Jane's happiness or misery, he seemed by some unaccountable impulse driven away from their hospitable roof before the time previously fixed for his departure.

No matter—he is gone—Mrs. Amersham is destined to receive Jane's letter too late, and Jane is doomed to receive her father's mandate too soon.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

CHAPTER X.

AMONGST the various circumstances connected with the fate of poor Jane, as time wore on, and matters seemed drawing to a close, nothing struck her more forcibly than the total change in Smylar's manner towards her, which she had noticed in her letter to Emma. What she had expected and even continued to expect from that officious personage, was a powerful advocacy of the merits of Mr. George Grindle, and a persuasive furtherance of her father's object, that the half-endured and half-permitted familiarity with which she had always been in the habit of talking to her young mistress, would, as she felt, have justified. But no—Smylar was more respectful than usual—graver than she ordinarily was, and scarcely exchanged a word with Jane.

The residence of Miss Pheezle in the house, and her constant association with Miss Bruff, might account, in a certain degree, for this change, inasmuch as Smylar had not the opportunities for *têtes-à-têtes*, which were so frequently afforded her when Jane was at home and alone. But still volumes are to be expressed in a momentary glance; a monosyllable well emphasized will convey a world of meaning; but when Smylar, having occasion to receive directions from Jane, was (at least as a matter of form) forced to see and speak to her, and even while settling arrangements for the dinners made for George and his father, never did she permit the slightest allusion to the avowed objects of their constant visits to pass her lips, nor allow even a twinkle of her bright and intelligent eyes to betray the existence of a thought one way or another, upon the subject in her mind.

It seems strange that in mere ordinary domestic life, so much mystery and such combinations should be found; but we may rely upon it there is not a roof in London, or in any other part of the civilized world, which does not cover a history; and if the crust

which keeps (in these days when no Asmodeus lives) all these matters secret, were broken, there is scarcely a family in the British empire, high, low, or middling, that would not present

"A dainty dish to set before a king."

Amongst those who were puzzled and mystified in the affair, poor dear Mrs. Amersham was not the least troubled. Jane, virtually at issue with her father, applies to her affectionate friend and relation, Emma, for advice. What advice can she give? Had she been armed substantively with any specific proposition, it would have been altogether a different matter; that is to say, in plain language and few words, if Jane had sanctioned her advocacy to Colonel Bruff of Miles Blackmore, upon whose marriage with Jane her whole heart was fixed, she felt she could have done so boldly and confidently, inasmuch as she should offer him a suitable match for his daughter, and suggest to him as a son-in-law, a man of whose good qualities, many accomplishments, and agreeable man-

ners, she herself had the highest opinion. But no, of *that* Jane would not hear. What then was to be done? In public life, a man asking for "something" is likely to get nothing, because the application is vague, and applicants are innumerable; let him ask for something specific, and the difficulty is considerably decreased; because, although the man may not get the office, still the patron (if in these days there be such a thing) knows precisely what his suitor is at. If Mrs. Amersham could have pitted Blackmore against Grindle, it would have reduced the whole affair to a comparison between two eligible parties; but as it was, what had she to offer to Colonel Bruff as a *succedaneum* for his great project? Nothing—and therefore was she disappointed and disheartened.

It was odd enough, in the conduct of what might be called the negotiations between the houses of Bruff and Grindle, that the two principals seemed to take the least possible part. The "high-contracting powers" were the baronet and the colonel, and George and Jane were, at the end of the probationary fortnight which had passed, much the same

as they were before it began. However, a sudden break-off was destined to occur, and George was forced, without chance of escape, to leave Jane for at least a week—to return, however, more assiduous, and more energetic than before his departure. In fact, poor Ellen was to go; and without George she scarcely could have borne the journey. Besides, the worthy baronet having been quite enlightened on the leading points of the history, felt assured that his exemplary son ought to make that sacrifice, unless he thought that his volatile parent would transact the affair as well.

The approaching week or ten days was a period of particularly deep interest to Jane. It was during the absence of her persecutor—why temporarily withdrawn she knew not—that she was to receive the advice of Emma Amersham; it was during that period when released from his, to *her*, odious attentions, she was to consider and calculate as to the adoption of the advice which might be proffered. During that period, Miss Pheezle was engaged to go and stay with a marchioness, to whom she always went for a few days in

the autumn, and during that period, consequently, Mrs. Smylar would have better and more frequent opportunities of talking to her young lady. But far away, and beyond these things, Sir George Grindle himself would have the gratification and delight of passing some of his evenings in the society of Jane, the insensibility to whose attractions, manifested by his son, filled him with wonder and astonishment.

To those who have made for themselves a little snuggery—who have—mean and low as it may sound to noble blood, or giant minds—trained round a casement, or over some little arbour, the pliant jasmine, or the fragrant eglantine—who have watched it with an almost tender care, and traced the progress of its growth—there is a pang in parting with such trifles, that the really worldly "wot not of." Ellen, dear Nelly let us call her,—for so *he* called her when he loved her best,—when summoned to her departure from the cottage which had been to her the home of her affections, felt more than here can be described or told, at quitting all the poor and intrinsically worthless objects which, associ-

ated in her mind with her happiest hours, were to *her* invaluable.

For months she had marked the spread of some ivy which George had planted; it was her pride, her pleasure, to see it thrive and flourish; every leaf as it burst forth was connected with some event of some particular day. It was like parting from a friend to quit that—to others—trivial object, destined most probably to be swept away by the next comer as an unsightly nuisance.

But she was resigned. George told her—gentlemanly creature that he was—that nothing but their temporary separation could save him from disinheritance and ruin—having nevertheless driven the father, whom he had represented as the tyrant destroyer of his happiness, to the corner of the road in his cab, and having set him down just before he reached the home which he was about to destroy; informing him that, if he chose, he might see the poor victim of his barbarity, by only waiting where he was, till *he*—the worthy son—should bring her out upon the little lawn for inspection.

The suspicion that Mr. George Grindle ever

had an idea of transferring the affections of Nelly to the worthy baronet, if it could have been effected, is one more odious than we dare entertain. It is known that nephews have *so* favoured uncles, and that great results have followed. But in this case, even venturing to presume that the infamy of Mr. George Grindle could have suggested such baseness, the purity and excellence of Ellen were quite sufficient guarantees for its non-execution.

Nelly bore the announcement of the necessity of the break-up with firmness and calmness; but when the time came for tearing down, and uprooting—there is no other word for it—her tender heart beat, and as each familiar object was thrust into boxes or baskets by unfeeling, because unconscious workmen, tears flowed from her once bright eyes; and when she saw her little nursery—where of late most of her only tranquil hours had been passed—dismantled, and despoiled of its furniture, she felt as none but mothers *can* feel, and as she had never felt before.

All this might have been spared her—but it was not. This furniture was to be sold—

it need not have been touched till she was gone. A want of consideration rather than of feeling caused this devastation; for George Grindle, who was a man of the world, had no notion that any body could feel any thing like attachment to a table, or a chair, or a cradle, or a plant, or a shrub, from association; and therefore, when it was decided that an abdication should take place, the measure was carried into effect forthwith; and the morning after these demonstrations had been made, George, Ellen, and Tiney, with her maid in the rumble, were on their road to Dover.

With George, let it be where it might, Nelly was happy. The child, just of an age to be pleased and interested, was delighted with all he saw; and his mother, convinced that she was fulfilling a duty, was cheerful and almost happy. At the end of their journey she should see her mother and her relations, and although she had gladly given them all up for the sake of George, still, as it was for his advantage, she was to be temporarily separated from him, what a consolation it was that she was going to them!

* * * * * *

Jane, upon whom the invincible George had, during his siege, made not the slightest impression, felt greatly relieved by his absence: more especially as it permitted her to give her very detestable toady, the bepainted and bewigged poetess, leave of absence. Still his retirement produced an effect upon her which was really and truly unexpected; and that was, a most inordinate desire to know really and truly what had become of his brother; and in this anxiety there mingled more of reason and prudence than may be ordinarily found in such solicitudes. She had been told by her father that Frank Grindle had of himself a very considerable fortune expectant from his maternal uncle. She had been forced into a sort of family compact, the ends of which are very seldom answered. She certainly very much liked the one brother, and very much disliked the other. It appeared to her—looking at it in as worldly a light as a very young woman could—that if the Grindle family was a family into which her father wished her to marry, his objection to a younger brother, with a good fortune, could not be exceed-

ingly strong; and as to the title, that was an affair of her own, about which she did not in the least care.

In fact it seemed to her—and this feeling had been, as we know, long before beaten into her mind by various circumstances—that her father's *great* object was to get her married. "Well then," thought Jane, "if that *is* to be, and Mrs. Smylar's advancement is to be the consequence, it will be infinitely better for me to meet my father's wishes, and at the same time become so far independent as not to find myself in my father's house the daughter-in-law of his impertinent housekeeper; but *George* Grindle I cannot love."

But now of Mrs. Smylar. As soon as Miss Pheezle was gone, and Mr. George Grindle had taken a trip to Paris to "*see a sick relation*," Mrs. Smylar resumed her usual playfulness of manner with Jane, and as the colonel and Sir George were wont to dine together at the Doldrum, Bruff not having eyes quick enough to see that the baronet not only would have been better pleased to dine in Harley-street, but quite ready, if he found it would *do*, to supplant his son in Jane's good

graces—she had now her opportunities of holding gentle converse with her young lady.

Disappointed rather by the colonel's cessation of invitations to dinner while George was away, Sir George volunteered an offer of himself to make one of a family trio at the colonel's. The offer was accepted; he came, and made himself exceedingly agreeable, and Jane looked at him and wondered to herself how he could be the father of such a being as his eldest son; indeed, she became so happy in the absence of her tormentor, that she "plucked up a spirit," as the song says, and asked where "Mr. Francis" was.

"Gad," said Sir George, "there you puzzle me; for I declare, upon my honour, I have no notion where he is. If there happens to be what they call a scientific meeting, or a great association for the advancement of general science, where they build stairs to save salmon the trouble of leaping, and prove beyond a doubt that Newcastle coals will burn if they are put upon a fire,—there, you may depend upon it, is Frank.—He thinks himself an uncommonly fine fellow,

because he has got a letter of thanks on vellum for having sent to the Rumfimusky-fosky College at Moscow a white black-beetle."

"I was not aware," said Jane, "that he devoted himself to such abstruse studies."

"Abstruse," said Sir George, "absurd, you mean, my dear Miss Bruff. Why, black-beetles are black-beetles—that is when they are not white—blue flies are blue flies—maggots, saving your presence, are maggots—fleas are fleas—well—and now—I have a high respect for Frank's perseverance—but will you tell me what earthly difference can it make to you or me, or any human being, how many vertebræ a frog has—how many legs a caterpillar—or how far a flea can go at one hop? I have no patience with him for wasting his time in such exquisite nonsense.

'The proper study of mankind is man.'

"I say 'woman,' but that's a variation from the author. Still, really, all these disquisitions about tadpoles, and what I used to call at school tittlebacks, seem to me to be hardly worth the time which the discussions occupy."

"I don't profess to know any thing about such things," said Jane; "but I think that such researches may tend to great results."

"I dare say they may," said Sir George, "like our disquisition the other day at Greenwich about the whitebait. I confess it does not much matter to me to have a geological description of the soil of St. James's-street—all I know is, it's stone on the top, and what's under I don't think you or I much care about. Now if Frank had his will, up would go the pavement—down he'd go, and be delighted to tell you something of its organization, which, if you are like me, you wouldn't understand; and then they would put the stones down again, and then we should have the pavement again, just as wise as we were before it had been pulled up."

"Ah!" said Jane, "but if every body acted upon your principle, Sir George, we should lose a vast deal of information."

"So you would," said Sir George, "and what then? I don't preach—I have no right to preach, for I am not good enough; but don't you see how regularly, in proportion as this 'knowledge' increases, 'infidelity' pros-

pers. Don't think I am getting saintish. How did it happen that in the most glorious times of this country, none of this wonderful enlightenment existed? Bacon wasn't a blockhead; Coke wasn't a fool; Queen Elizabeth was something; Shakspeare wasn't quite an idiot; Newton wasn't a dunce; Milton, though he was blind, was not quite contemptible: and come nearer; your Addisons, Swifts, Popes, Drydens, and half a hundred more, were rather above par. *They* never troubled their heads about the backbones of lizards, or the antlers of snails; and as for geology, there wasn't one of them who knew what Silex meant, or ever talked about Quartz, except with regard to his drinking."

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "you've no taste for those sorts of things, and you are right. Come, Jenny, go—go—I've rung the bell—you'll find lights up stairs."

And so, with one of those very uncongenial snubs which the colonel was in the habit of giving, away went Jane, expelled only because she glanced at Frank Grindle, and seemed disposed to defend his meritorious scientific pursuits. Sir George leaped from his chair

to open the door to permit her egress, and truth to say, began to feel more and more sorry that he had so hastily driven his amiable son to the necessity of breaking up his establishment in the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park.

And now it was immediately subsequent to this, that Mrs. Smylar first made her reappearance after the *old* fashion, in the drawing-room, and began to resume her ordinary mode of addressing Jane. But her manner was evidently meant to be prepossessing and winning; and moreover, there was in her conduct an air of caution and watchfulness of being overheard, which was not usual with her when she had previously chosen to be familiar and communicative.

"So Miss Jane," said she, "Mr. Grindle has gone out of town—to France isn't he?"

"I believe he is," said Jane, who was not quite aware of his destination, and somehow would have been better pleased if Mrs. Smylar could have informed her to what part of the world his brother had betaken himself.

"A fine-looking person?" said Smylar, somewhat interrogatively.

"Yes," said Jane, turning over the leaves of a book which lay before her.

"Surely you think him handsome?" said Mrs. Smylar.

"To tell you the truth, Smylar," said Jane, "I have not thought about it."

"No?" said Smylar. "And yet he has been here very often—constantly, as one may say."

"That's quite true," said Jane.

"Well, now," said Mrs. Smylar, "will you be very angry, Miss Jane, if I tell you what *I* think?"

"Not I," said Jane, perfectly satisfied that Mrs. Smylar was prepared with an eulogium of the most extravagant character of his person, mind, qualities, qualifications, all delivered, cut and dry by her father to his fair minister, in order to her edification and improvement.

"Of course the colonel is to know nothing of this," said Smylar.

Jane was somewhat startled by this appeal, inasmuch as the idea of Smylar's making a confidence with *her*, was rather a novelty in the arrangements of the establishment; but

"of course," as Mrs. Smylar said, Jane agreed to her conditions.

"Well, then," said Smylar, "I think him odious; and if I were you, Jane,"—she called her Jane,—"I would never consent to marry him. He is what I call a nasty-looking fellow. I have taken care to look at him over the staircase—I hate that sort of man—and *I* wouldn't marry him."

"But," said Jane, "my father wishes me to marry him, and tells me I must love him."

"Must," said Smylar, "as the proverb goes, 'is for the king;' but there is no must in matters like these. I have had some knowledge of the world,—and when I was what I thought well to do, have had some experience as to the sort of men to be trusted and loved. This Mr. George Grindle is neither to be loved nor trusted—have nothing to say to him. If you were my own daughter, I could not feel a greater regard for you—send him away—refuse him."

"But, Smylar," said Jane, "it is quite true that our opinions happen to coincide; still how am I to evade my father's orders—his positive commands?"

"How!" said Smylar, "I cannot tell you *how;* but there *are* ways enough if you choose. He loves you too well to be seriously angry with you long; you may manage him just as you please,—fair words and your own free will—*that* I am sure of—as sure as I am that Mr. Grindle is not the husband for *you.*"

"Well," said Jane, "knowing, Mrs. Smylar, how readily you generally agree with papa, I must own I am not a little surprised at your expressing such opinions of his most particular favourite."

"You don't know me yet," said Mrs. Smylar, her eyes filling with tears, kept always in a state of distillation ready for use by such people. "I know that you have a bad opinion of me, and think I influence the colonel. I may perhaps have some little power over him, engendered by what I trust even *you* will believe to be a scrupulous attention to his interests, and the prudential regulation of his establishment. But Jane,—and I presume to call you Jane, because I feel a deep interest in all that concerns you,—I cannot bear to see you sacrificed to a popinjay like that—a pretender—a second-

class dandy, who would not, when I was in the profession, have been permitted to play even a walking gentleman in genteel comedy."

"But," said Jane, "have you ever hinted to papa your disapprobation of this favourite of his?"

"Me!" said Smylar, "what opportunity have I of talking to the colonel, except upon mere matters of household business?—especially when my dear young lady is in town; for then even those occasions and opportunities are more rare. What *he* thinks upon this business, I honestly own I do not regard. That thing—man I cannot even bring myself to call him—is odious, and must be odious to any living woman."

"The day they both were here," said Jane, meaning what she said to mean nothing, "did you see his brother?"

"Yes," said Smylar. "I did—a very different-looking person; but of course I know nothing more—he is gone into the country, isn't he, Miss Jane?"

"I really don't know," said Jane.

"If you like to know," said Smylar, "there

can be no great difficulty about it;—but isn't it odd that if you are interested about him —"

— "Me!" said Jane, exceedingly confused, and feeling herself blush—"I am not interested about him—what could have put that into your head?"

"Nothing, my dear Miss Jane," said Smylar, looking at her own bright cunning eyes in the looking-glass over the chimney-piece, "except that it struck me by your manner of inquiring after him, that you might have been pleased with him the day he dined here, and the day you invited him to Greenwich."

Here—as is always the case with the *very* cunning ones—Mrs. Smylar let out, as they say, a little more than was quite prudent, or would have been quite prudent had her "recipient" been quicker in her apprehension of the ways of the world; because it was evident that if the gallant colonel, who never talked to her of any thing but household matters, had not enlarged upon Jane's admission to him touching her "gentle remind" to the white "*bêtise*" at Greenwich, which she had

given to Frank, Smylar never could, by any possibility, have known any thing about it. This particular "coincidence" did not, however, strike poor dear Jane; and the actress who, in a moment after she had made it, recollected her blunder, said, or did something to cover her own indiscretion, and change the subject of their conversation.

"I certainly think of the two," said Jane, "Francis Grindle is infinitely preferable; but what I have said to papa is, why force me to marry any body?—I am extremely happy as I am. If by any chance I should see a man whose qualities and accomplishments might, in my estimation, be calculated to increase that happiness, well and good; but why I am to be sent for up to London, from delightful society, amusement, and every thing agreeable, to be driven into a marriage, and *that* with a man whom, as *you* say, no rational woman could endure, I do not understand."

"Well," said Smylar, "as I have before said, I do not venture to give you advice; but, without saying too much, this I will say,

that if I were you, before I would marry that man, I would suffer any thing—every thing that a father could inflict upon me."

"I have written to Mrs. Amersham," said the confiding Jane, "to ask her her opinion as to the course I should pursue. Perhaps I shall hear to-morrow, and at all events he—Mr. George Grindle—is not to be back for a week at least."

"I wonder now," said Smylar, looking as innocent as one of the country-girls in farces, whose parts when she was "in the profession" she had been in the habit of enacting,—"I wonder now what has taken *him* to France just at this particular moment."

"Some unavoidable business, papa says," answered Jane.

"A nice piece of business, no doubt," said Smylar. "I have no patience with the fellow. Oh! Miss Jane, I *could* tell you a story which you ought to know, but which I must not enlighten you with. It is altogether an ugly affair; and in whatever way you make up your mind to resist the plan, I'll help you —yes, to the uttermost; so, now depend upon *me*—wait till you hear from Mrs. Amersham

—I think I can guess what she'll say—and *then* command *me*."

Saying which, Smylar withdrew, leaving Jane excessively astonished at the total change which a few days—nay, hours—had worked in that person's character and conduct towards her. The idea of her lending herself to a conspiracy against the colonel, with the view of thwarting his most favourite intentions, and defeating his best-cherished scheme, seemed of itself unintelligible; but the sudden and violent hatred which the "woman of the world" had taken against George Grindle, was even more extraordinary still; and when she retired, our poor dear girl felt more puzzled than before; she did not see her way through the darkness by which she was enveloped, and wistfully looked forward to Emma's letter, as to something which might serve to guide her through the misty maze in which she was bewildered.

The allusion made by Smylar to Mr. Francis Grindle's present "local habitation" coming so immediately after the baronet's

plain and evidently undisguised denial of any knowledge of his then position, was something which—perhaps unconsciously—more excited Jane, as far as her own feelings went, than any thing else she had said—barring always the marvellous change in the tone of her conversation as regarded the colonel. It struck her that Smylar *did* know what Sir George did *not*; and, although, even if she possessed the information, she could make no use of it, she might, if she chose to condescend to any thing like a confidence with a person she despised, ascertain the present residence of Francis Grindle. But why should she think about him? She cared for him only as it were comparatively, and because strangely, yet with some strengthening circumstances of probability, she considered that her father had determined she should marry *a* Grindle. This feeling narrowed her views as it hurried her determination, and although more than ever puzzled by the new tone of Mrs. Smylar's conversation, she could not divest herself of the idea that compliance with her father's commands

was her only chance of escape from the future domination of Smylar in the character of mother-in-law.

Then, again, inexperienced as she was in the world's ways, as we have just said, Jane could not account for Smylar's personal dislike of George Grindle, because, in point of fact, there was nothing personally disagreeable about him. He had ringlets, and curls, and was something like a sheep in the face, and was exceedingly fine, and very coxcombical; but still he was good-looking. With a good figure of its school, and just as one would have thought such a person as Mrs. Smylar would have pronounced "uncommon," the fault he had, was in his manner—the tone of his conversation—and the affected superiority to the part he could in reality play in the world. But of *this*, Smylar, who in all probability had never heard him speak—unless upon her favourite system of listening—could not judge; and, therefore, Jane began to think that for some reason—inasmuch as she had brought herself to believe that Smylar never either said or did any thing without a motive—Francis

Grindle *had* secured her interests, and that it was in *his* favour she was deprecating the pretensions of George. It is impossible to comprehend the vast range of thoughts, and fancies, and hopes, and expectations, of a creature like the tender, gentle Jane, when once the mind is agitated as hers was at the time in question.

But then again came reason to her aid. How, when, where, and even why, should Frank have taken any measures of this sort? — he had never—that she knew of—even seen Smylar—he had seen *her* but thrice, and upon those occasions he had betrayed in all his words and actions a submissive acquiescence in what as we know he considered a fixed family arrangement. The brief balcony-scene at Greenwich was a matter of accident; if he felt grateful to Jane for the "remind," he scarcely had time to express his feelings; he came no more; he quitted town;—and yet after all her reasoning, the glimmering star of hope was still in her eye, and in spite of all the improbabilities, not to call them impossibilities, of the case, she could not quite divest herself of the notion

that somehow or other—how she could not comprehend—the amiable and accomplished Francis was the latent cause of Smylar's *tirade* against his brother.

Jane's reflections and considerations upon this point were destined to be broken in upon by the arrival to coffee of Sir George and the colonel; Sir George being more gallant than usual, and succeeding in making his future daughter-in-law believe him a most delightful person.

We must leave the worthy baronet seated by her side on a sofa, sipping curaçoa, and entertaining her with all the little news which the season of the year afforded, and really and truly amusing and pleasing her with his anecdotical conversation, to turn to the proceedings of his hopeful son, who had some three or four days before taken his departure from the happy isle.

Having taken every *unnecessary* precaution to elude his father's vigilance, George Grindle by break of day broke up from the cottage, and much to his own annoyance started for France with his affectionate Nelly and the child. But the effort to maintain a conver-

sation with his once loved and now repudiated companion, required more hypocrisy and deceit than even *he* was master of. It was impossible for him to go through a whole day's journey to Dover listening to that poor girl's projects for his return to France at as early a period as possible, and hoping for their eventual reconciliation with Sir George, and still keep up the delusion. Therefore, when they changed horses at Dartford, he proposed, for the greater convenience of Tiney and his mother, that her maid should exchange places with him, and get into the carriage, while he mounted the rumble—a change, certainly not welcome to Ellen, nor at all in consonance with his former devotedness and love of her society. However, he wished it, and his wish was law.

When they reached Canterbury it was getting duskish, and Ellen urged him to resume his place, but he still refused, on the ground of a headach, and his preference for air. Now, it had been his original intention to stop at Canterbury and sleep, on account of the child, who might not so well bear the fatigue of a long journey—at least such was

Ellen's arrangement; — nevertheless they pushed on at once to Dover, which they reached about seven in the evening.

Here, having ordered dinner, and Tiney having been sent to his rest, George gave all necessary directions for shipping the carriage in the morning packet,—and having swallowed a hasty and tasteless meal, persuaded Ellen to get to bed soon, in order to be ready for the early start; with which bidding, or request, she complied, with all her wonted readiness, leaving George to take a stroll along the parade to cool his heated brain,—for heated it was with excitement and the journey,—and calculate without the fear of interruption, the best means of doing what he called, "letting Nelly down easy when he got her to her journey's end."

On his return to the hotel he wrote a letter to his worthy father, informing him of his progress so far on his barbarous expedition; and another—the first he had ever ventured upon, or, indeed, had occasion to address to her—to Jane—which was destined to reach her hand simultaneously with the one she

had so anxiously anticipated from Emma; —so

"The bane and antidote were both before her."

But of this event, or the effects producible or produced by the coincidence, we can yet know nothing, since it is now our province to follow, or rather accompany, the departing trio on their way to Versailles.

The hurry and bustle of a daybreak departure superseded all other feelings and sentiments in the morning; and having got Nelly and her darling child on board the steamer, George, anxiously solicitous for their comfort, advised her to go below with Tiney, and take possession of some snug berth, where they would be less affected by a roughish sea, and where — which was another object — they would be out of the way of observation by their fellow-passengers.

There were not many on board, for some of the ladies who had intended crossing were deterred by the freshness of the breeze, which to their delicate senses was magnified into a gale. George ran his eye over the few

who remained on deck, and having satisfied himself that they were nobodies, got into his carriage and endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. Had he chanced to have a book in his possession, the consummation he sought would soon have been effected; for somehow or other, reading, whenever he tried it, produced the happy symptoms of somnolency he now so anxiously courted.

In his bootless attempt, bookless as he was, he failed, and the sun bursting out from the clouds, and the breeze moderating in proportion as they neared the French coast, he descended from his travelling-chariot—or rather that of Sir George—which, being undistinguished by any armorial distinctions (for reasons best known to both father and son), would not have betrayed, even to the best herald on St. Benet's-hill, the name or rank of the owner. The particular look of this carriage had attracted the notice of one passenger, who, enveloped in his cloak, continued walking the deck during the whole of the passage, rather liking "the rocking of the *elements*" as suiting the present temper of his mind, and when the particularly fine

owner of it re-emerged from its door, the tall stranger in the cloak having made some brief apology to George for taking such a liberty, (which brief apology was, under the circumstances, exceedingly well received,) asked him who built it.

George, rather flattered at finding *the* man upon whom his mind had conferred the distinction of *the* gentleman of the party, particularly stricken by the appearance of the carriage, forthwith gave him the required information, and thence arose an hour's personal acquaintance. They walked together and talked, and before a quarter of the period of their intimacy of sixty minutes had expired, each of them was driven into a puzzle to know whom the other was, and how it were possible that two men moving evidently in the same sphere should not have been in some degree known to each other before.

It is very good fun to watch two men under similar circumstances, trying to find out by the most roundabout means, and the most insignificant—the chancellor might call them "impertinent"—questions, something more of each other. The tall man in the cloak

was not a member of Crockford's, but he belonged to the Travellers'—George belonged to Crockford's, but was *not* a member of the Travellers'. The tall man in the cloak was going to France to stay—George was only going for part of a week. The servant of the tall man in the cloak came to him to know whether he hadn't better get the luggage ready for landing—George had no servant with him—why? The tall man in the cloak was going honourably on *his* visit to France—George was sneaking away for the perpetration of a baseness, at which the tall man in the cloak would have shuddered.

"I must go below," said George Grindle, "and look after my little woman."

The tall man in the cloak having won so much of his confidence, and even so much of his admiration, by his manners and conversation, George felt—and oh! how strangely contradictory are all human feelings—an anxiety that he should see the lovely creature whom *he* was on the eve of deserting.

He went—the water being now smooth under the lee of the land, he thought she would like to come upon deck, and the

darling little bright-eyed child was impatient for a run.

The tall man in the cloak took that opportunity of asking one of the men belonging to the steamer, if he knew whose carriage that was—pointing to the plain olive-green chariot in question.

"Yes, sir," said the man, touching his hat with his hand turned horizontally; "Mr. Grindle's, sir—son of Sir George Grindle—he very often comes and goes by us."

The tall man in the cloak said nothing but the words, "Thank you," and resumed his walk.

What the thoughts were, that were passing in the mind of the tall man in the cloak when he heard this name—the name of a man he had never seen before, never known, and, as it should seem, could not in the slightest degree be interested about, who shall pretend to guess?

George Grindle returned with the lovely Ellen leaning on his arm, looking more lovely than ever. The rest she had taken had refreshed her, and George's kindness in coming below to seek her society, reminded her of

other days; and when she made her appearance, resting for support upon the heartless fiend who was resolved in eight-and-forty hours more to abandon her, with her beautiful boy holding her other hand, the stranger was evidently much stricken.

George did not know how, or by what name, to present him to Ellen; but there is a sort of conventional feeling of confidence amongst gentlemen, and, although ignorant of the *name*, George was perfectly satisfied of the condition and quality of his anonymous friend, and a single simple bow of recognition on his part, followed by a question of no great intrinsic importance, but valuable in forming a link in what seemed to be designed to be a general conversation amongst themselves, thawed the ice, and brought the trio into easy communication: a conclusion to which they were more speedily and less formally brought by an expression on the part of Tiney, of the most violent love-at-first-sight of a cane of which the tall man in the cloak happened to be the possessor. His kindness to the child, who immediately pounced upon the object of his delight, in

spite of the awful frown of his mother, and his instant conversion of it into a horse for his own exercise, won the esteem and regard of Ellen, while George felt a strange sort of vanity in seeing how very much the tall man in the cloak admired Tiney's mamma.

The duration or extent of his acquaintance with George, whose name even he did not know from the proper authority, did not seem to justify the tall man in the cloak in asking any questions concerning the object of their voyage; only certain it was, that the gentleman whom *he* knew to be Mr. George Grindle, had told him that *his* visit to France would be exceedingly short. Now it seemed from something which passed in the course of their conversation, that *her* stay was likely to be permanent; and this certainly did awaken a certain degree of desire on the part of the tall man in the cloak to know something more of their history. Moreover there was a plaintiveness in all Ellen said, and in her looks a sort of restless anxiety, which seemed only to be relieved when she caught a look of kindness from George; and therefore, it might perhaps have been wrong

in its degree, but it was perfectly natural, that when George—who having no man-servant with him, was forced to take more upon himself than if he had had one—was gone to look after something, and see about something else, the tall man in the cloak did venture to ask Ellen if she was going to remain in France.

"For the present," said Ellen, "I am going to stay at Versailles with my mother."

This perfectly satisfied the stranger, and dissipated into thin air some doubts which had grown up in his mind as to the oddness of the proposed separation between George and the lady. When George returned, the tall man in the cloak resumed his distant civility, and played with Tiney and the stick, even more assiduously than before.

The voyage ended, the squabblings of *commissionnaires*, the rush of baggage-bearers, the cries of contending "wreckers," as they may be called, the importunity of the *douaniers*, and all the rest of it, suddenly cut the knot of the incipient acquaintance of George and the tall man in the cloak. They were soon

separated in the crowd, and George anxious to get on, for the sake of a speedy return, made every exertion to get the superfluous formalities over, and, in less than three hours from their arrival at Calais, the wretched trio for such they seemed destined to be, were on their way to Boulogne.

Ellen had been accustomed to France, and had been educated there in an English school on Montmartre, whence she had been taken, when she was supposed to have learned enough of the nothingness of which boarding-school education is made up, by her mother, and with *her* domesticated at Versailles; and even yet she looked back to the neat little parterres in the school-garden, the baize-covered breakfast-tables, and the protecting dog at the entrance, with recollections as strong as if *la belle France* had been her own country. To her, the broad expanse of unenclosed, yet highly-cultivated country, the straggling and scantily-populated hamlets, which so forcibly strike the English eye upon leaving our thickly-peopled, fertile Kentish valleys, were almost picturesque;

and, as associated with later affections, and even more endearing ties, she welcomed them with pleasure. It was through this country she had passed with George,—her beloved George,—after having taken that step which had excluded her from all society except that of her betrayer. Those were days to *her* of pure bright happiness, and a recurrence to them was not the less blissful because some dark clouds, unlooked for and unanticipated by her, had since risen upon her fate.

To George, whose notions of the picturesque were of a very peculiar order, the whole affair was monotony the most melancholy; his opinion of scenery was very much of the same school as that of the man who declared that if he were obliged to live in the country, he would have the approach to his house paved, and hire a hackney-coach by the year to drive up and down all day before his windows.

George duly appreciated the charms of "the shady side of Pall-mall," "the groves of tall chimneys," and all the other attributes

of London, so well sung by the veteran bard Captain Morris; and it was there, and amongst their attributes, his thoughts were resting while making his present wearisome progress. But what were such thoughts as *his* worth, when the secondary object of them was such a being as Jane Bruff, and when they scarcely could wander to her fortune—the sole object of attraction to him—without resting remorselessly and wretchedly upon the lovely companion of his journey?

Ellen could not fail to notice and feel deeply the absence and abstraction by which George's conduct was characterized; but she, poor confiding girl, attributed them to the cause in which originated her own anxiety and sorrow—the approaching separation of two fond hearts, increased as she thought, on his part, by his deep losses at play, and the pain he felt at his estrangement from his father, partly, if not chiefly, as he had made her believe, consequent upon his connexion with her. It was true she was returning to an affectionate parent, whose fate, at least as far as we are concerned at present, is

equally involved in mystery with that of her child. But although the proverb makes the mother say,

> " My son is my son till he gets him a wife,
> My daughter's my daughter the whole of her life,"

still Ellen could not overcome the gnawing recollection that she was for a time to be separated from George—herself being the cause of the separation. Poor Nelly!

The travellers slept at Montreuil on account of Tiney, and proceeded on their journey next morning. When they reached Abbeville, Tiney was hungry and to be refreshed, and Nelly herself felt as if even she could eat something. George readily acceded to the suggestion of calling a halt, accordingly, a remarkably nice clean meal, although much too early for dinner, according to George's opinion, was served to them in the *salle-à-manger* under the gateway of the *Tête de Bœuf.*

While this repast was preparing, George what he called " stretched his legs," by walking out of the inn-yard, disdaining some very pressing remarks of sundry congregated beggars, who suggested the propriety of his visit-

ing the beautiful cathedral, and the river Somme, all of which they did with a pride and enthusiasm wholly unknown to the lower orders of English, who rather wonder at the pursuits of investigating travellers, than aid them in accomplishing their objects. To all these incitements to the picturesque George turned a deaf ear, and maintained in all its force the purity of the English character, according to the French acceptation, by bestowing upon them a few of those monosyllabic anathemas, for which our countrymen are said to be so celebrated throughout the civilized world.

Turning back again, to avoid the importunities of these craving *cognoscenti*, George's eyes encountered, emerging from the door of a room opposite to that in which his dinner was being prepared, the tall man in the cloak who had been his fellow-passenger in the steamer. "I seem," said the stranger, accosting George, "to have got the start of you."

"Why," said George, "*you* travel lightly and alone; I have more companions and luggage. We slept last night at Montreuil. However, I propose to push on to Grandvil-

liers to-night if I can.—Are you now for Paris?"

"No," said the stranger, "I have some idea of making this a point to start from, in making a little tour which I have for some time had in contemplation. I have no doubt I shall end in Paris."

"So probably shall I," said George, "eventually; but for the present I only make a flying visit. Indeed, I shall merely pass through it to deposit my young lady with her mother at Versailles, whither I have promised her for some time to go; and then scamper back to London as fast as I can."

"So then," thought the stranger, "the account the lady gave of herself is the true one. Why I should have doubted her I know not—that she is good and amiable I am sure." In fact, the stranger felt a deep interest in Ellen even at first sight; he was pleased with the manful playfulness of her child, and that interest increased when he saw her again at Abbeville, recovered from the temporary disarrangement caused by the little voyage, and looking as bright and beautiful as any one could look whose heart was full

of grief, and whose eyes gave evidence that tears had been there.

George Grindle saw that the stranger *was* interested about them, and being satisfied by his manner, the mode in which he travelled, and the way in which he was served, that he was safely to be cultivated, was by no means disinclined to enlist him as a participator in the meal which was just ready; and indeed gave such indications of his wishes on that point, as to induce the stranger in the cloak to tell him that he had already taken a substantial luncheon; which, joined to the fact that George was hastening forward as speedily as possible, would render that arrangement useless. But when the stranger made his bow, he certainly *did* look at Ellen in a very peculiar manner. The look he gave was neither presumptuous nor licentious; it was not a look of worldly love; nor was it a look of an expectation of meeting with her again, founded, as with some men it might have been, on her simple statement of her destination to Versailles, corroborated by the subsequent announcement of George. But, divested as it was of all or any of these

attributes, the look struck into the gentle Ellen's heart; in it, there seemed to her to be something awfully prophetic. She tried to rally from the feeling with which it had impressed her. What could this man be to *her*, or she to *him?* Yet the intensity of feeling which he exhibited on leaving them —so much deeper and even more solemn in its character than it was when they had separated in the morning at Calais—astonished her not more, than the difficulty she had in endeavouring to drive it from her mind and memory.

To Tiney the stranger presented the much-loved stick on which in the packet he had taken his mimic equestrian exercise. George begged that he would not indulge the child so very much, but the stranger insisted; and *la fille* at the *Tête de Bœuf* having announced to *Madame* that she was served, the newly-made friends prepared for their separation.

"Perhaps," said the stranger, "we may hereafter meet in Paris. I shall be happy if you will permit me to renew our acquaintance at some future opportunity;" and these words were strongly emphasized with another look

at Ellen, perceived by George, but without any of the nervous anxiety, or jealous displeasure, which a few months before would have agitated and angered him. On the contrary, he rejoined upon the stranger by saying, that after his kindness to Tiney, he was quite sure his mamma would be most happy, if he happened to go to Versailles, to present him to her mother, Mrs. Eversfield, who had long been residing there, and who would be exceedingly glad to evince her gratitude for his great consideration of her little spoiled grandson.

Ellen, to say truth, was rather surprised at the mode in which George gave an invitation to *her* mother's house to a perfect stranger; but even the most trifling mark of kindness to a darling child excites a fond mother's gratitude, and the good-nature with which he had humoured Tiney's fancy for his stick, had secured him her good opinion, not deteriorated by the consciousness of the interest which, as we have just seen, she felt strongly convinced he took in her fate, but which she was equally certain involved no sentiment which she might not properly cherish.

"Good day, then," said the stranger, "you will be rattling over these terrific roads while I shall be quietly studying the beauties of this part of France, in which I have never staid. When I am in Paris, the Hôtel de Bourbon is my *pied à terre*, and having taken so great a liberty with you, as to intrude myself, I leave you my card, in order that if you are passing my door, and feel so inclined, we may meet again."

Now to George, giving *his* card in return was the thing of all others he would have wished to avoid; but as the acquaintance, by the intervention of Tiney, had so far progressed, it did not seem possible for him to avoid the expression of mutual confidence and anxiety that they might know more of each other. He had hoped to get entirely clear of any further *dénouement*, in the first instance, by their separation at Calais; and in the second, when they met at Abbeville, by giving the stranger the name and address of Ellen's mother, at Versailles, and not being aware that the stranger knew perfectly well who he was, would, if he could, have shuffled.

It was, however, in vain, and George, thus driven to the act, wrote on a piece of paper, having no visiting ticket with him, "Mr. Grindle—Crockford's," adding, as he presented it to the stranger, that wherever he might be, *that* address would surely find him; little supposing at the moment that as

"The great globe itself shall dissolve,"

that magnificent, convenient, convivial, agreeable, and admirable establishment was destined to dissipation wholly of another character from that for which the uninitiated choose to censure it. The "mighty master," full of wealth, and growing full of years, having achieved his labours, has resolved, like Hercules, to give up his club. At the period of which we treat, that event had not even been surmised or anticipated, and the stranger received the card as describing in a perfectly satisfactory manner the "whereabout" of Mr. George Grindle.

The new friends shook hands, the stranger shook hands with poor Ellen, and kissing the

forehead of her darling boy, quitted them, leaving in the possession of Mr. George Grindle, his card, thus engraven and written:

"MR. MILES BLACKMORE,

"*Hotel de Bourbon.*"

TAYLOR INSTITUTION LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER XI.

In the course of everyday life, persons moving in a certain circle, even if not personally acquainted with particular men or women, or even not knowing them by sight, are so constantly in the habit of hearing their names, that the moment George Grindle cast his eyes upon Miles Blackmore's card, he felt perfectly sure that he had heard something about him somewhere. It was natural that he *should* have heard something about him, and it was true that he had; for in the course of the constant visitations which he had during the last fortnight or three weeks inflicted upon Jane Bruff, it was scarcely possible that Miles Blackmore should not have been mentioned. Still at

the moment he could not recal to his memory when or *what* he had heard of him; and the only feeling to which the possession of his card gave rise, was one of self-satisfaction at having judged correctly the character and condition of the man in the cloak in the steam-packet: for one of the predominant anxieties of a fool is to be considered exceedingly shrewd and penetrating.

Ellen's feelings, when Miles Blackmore left them, were to herself inexplicable. As we have already observed, his parting look excited, and even troubled her in no ordinary degree. Had it been characterized by an expression such as that which beamed in the countenance of George's most particular friend, Jack Ashford, the momentary disgust it would have caused, would have been followed by a forgetfulness of the offender. But the earnest devotedness of Miles Blackmore's manner, the almost solemn way in which he took leave of her, were startling and affecting—they were fraternal—they expressed a deep interest in her fate—a fate of the peculiarity of which she herself was not

88988

then conscious, and it was in vain she tried, during the dinner with George and Tiney, to drive from her thoughts the recollection of it.

"Uncommon nice fellow!" said George; "don't you think so, Nelly?"

"Who?" asked she.

"Who?" replied George. "Why our new, intimate, and very slight acquaintance, Mr. Miles Blackmore."

"He seems exceedingly agreeable," said Ellen, helping Tiney to some of the fruit from a *charlotte*, to avoid the scrutinizing glance of George, who had learned to read her thoughts in the beautiful index of her mind, and which, for the first time in her life, she felt half afraid to meet.

"And seems," said George, "I think, to have formed an exceedingly favourable opinion of you. I dare say you will see more of him at Versailles; there was a good deal of what I call come-againishness in his manner."

"Why," said Ellen, "as he is, as the card he gave you says, domiciled in Paris,

when he settles himself any where in France, I do not exactly know why we should see more of him at Versailles."

Ellen was much too ingenuous, too innocent, and too simple-minded to take heed of the constant endeavours of her beloved George to entangle her upon every available occasion—not yet practically, but as far as diverting her thoughts into such channels went—into some new *liaison*. She saw in it nothing but the delightful confidence of mutual love, and a desire to increase as much as possible the limited circle of their acquaintance; but, strange to say, upon the present occasion, she felt vexed at his allusion to his supposition of Blackmore's preference, and was even conscious of blushing; the very thing she most particularly wished to avoid at the moment, inasmuch as she was aware that the blue eyes of her beloved George were fixed upon her, and she feared that the agitation of which she was conscious might be attributed by him to the effect of feelings of a nature and character totally different from those by which she really was affected.

Luckily, Tiney dropped his spoon, and as they had dispensed with any attendance during that which (saving Tiny's presence) was their *tête-à-tête* meal, and Ellen's stooping to pick it up for her "awkward little boy," answered two purposes—it concealed the flush of her cheek as she stooped, and accounted for it when she raised her head after the exertion.

"As to *that*," said George, "a man lives at Paris—but Versailles *is* Paris—Richmond is London. That has nothing to do with it. I'll bet you as many pairs of gloves as shall last you for a twelvemonth, that I shall hear from you, that Mr. Miles Blackmore has paid his devoirs at Mrs. Eversfield's, before we are six weeks older."

"You know more of the world," said Ellen, "and of this gentleman than I do; you were for an hour or two talking to him in the steam boat; but as far as I am concerned, I really do not see why you should anticipate any such invasion of mamma's quiet retreat."

"You do *not* see, Nelly," said George, finishing a glass of Chablis. "We *shall* see

—eh—Tiney, my boy? Don't you love that nice gentleman that gave you that pretty stick?"

"Yes," said Tiney, "that I do—and I love him too because he loves mamma."

"There," said George—"there, Nelly, what do you think of *that?*—that's what I call the march of intellect—you'll do, my lad. So he loves mamma, does he? What makes you think that, Tiney?"

"Because," said the child, "he looked so goodnatured when he went away—just as you do, 'pa."

"Now, my Nelly, what do you think?" said George, laughingly.

"Think," said Ellen, "that Tiney and you are about equally wise. How can you talk such nonsense—or teach your child to talk such nonsense!"

"'Tis his mother tongue, Nelly," said Grindle; "only it's what I call a 'coincidence'—ha! ha! ha!—don't look cross, Nelly. What! crying—about what?"

That was a question Nelly could not have fairly answered to George. Perhaps to nobody on earth could she have explained—

inasmuch as she could not explain it to herself—the interest which the stranger had excited in her mind. We have already seen that its character was farthest in the world from that which George Grindle would have assigned to it, but still it *was* an interest; and the pang which brought tea into Ellen's eyes was one of grief, that, for the first time since she had known George, she could by any possibility be influenced by any feeling, the nature or origin of which she could not at once avow.

"You should not, dearest George," sobbed the poor girl, "you should not speak to me so—"

"Speak, dearest!" said Grindle, "I only charge you with having made a conquest. Your son and I agree upon that point—the chip and the old block are *d'accord*."

"Poor babe!" said Ellen, drawing the child to her and kissing him with all the tenderness of a devoted mother, "you ought not to do this, George. I do not deserve it."

"Deserve what, Nell?" said George. "You can't help it—if ladies will have fine eyes, fine features, fine figures, and charming

manners, how the deuce are they to blame? I said nothing about *you*. I was talking of my intimate and slight acquaintance, Mr. Blackmore. It's quite clear that you have hit him hard—knocked him over—so don't affect to deny it—as I say, no fault of yours—it only shows *your* power and *his* taste. I look upon it as uncommonly complimentary to your merit and his judgment."

"Dear George," said Ellen, "do not drink any more of that wine. It is time we should be going, if we are to sleep at Beauvilliers to-night. I never saw you in so strange a humour before."

"Not strange, dear," said George. "I have *my* opinions. I think nothing can be a greater practical compliment to any man than to see chained the lady who has enchained others. I am not singular—it's the regular line to take, go where you will. The more danglers a wife has, the better pleased seems the husband, and—"

"Go where I will!" said Ellen. "*I* go nowhere; and really, if that *is* the fashion, I have no desire to belong to the society in which you see it."

"Oh no," said George, "you—and all that, *that's* another thing of course; but I only say—and if you don't cry, I'll say nothing more than order out the horses. All I mean to say is, that it is quite clear to me that Mr. Miles Blackmore is a man of good taste."

Ellen shook her head, her eyes were cast down, and her heart ached. The preparations incidental to their progress checked any further conversation on the subject, which seemed uppermost in Mr. George Grindle's mind, and the only reference to the matter which took place was, when they were settling themselves in the carriage, and Tiney, whose whole heart and soul were centred in Mr. Miles Blackmore's stick, was most solicitous about its position and security, was begging to have it put at the door that he might keep his eye upon it, instead of having it entombed in the sword-case. George handed it to Ellen, saying to the child.

"It's quite safe, Tiney—depend upon it your mamma will take care of *that* for you."

If the proverb, "*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*," is to be depended upon, the

doing since his disappearance from London. Our solicitude is scarcely less than that of dear Jane Bruff. Whether our inquiries may be more successful than those which she made of his worthy and agreeable father, we know not, but we have reason to believe, that wherever he may be, the interest created in his mind—perhaps his heart—by Jane, brief as their acquaintance has been; has not decreased since he so honourably tore himself away from her.

It is a curious, and by no means a worthless pursuit, to search, as far as one is able, into minds, for motives, the results of which are, looking superficially, in many cases exactly similar, but which in point of origin are wholly different. For instance, two very foolish people meet for the first time, and fall in love at first sight. That all strangers must, to become acquainted, meet is self-evident, and that "first impressions" have their effect is unquestionable; but the love —for love it *was*—of Francis for Jane, and the deep interest which she took in him, and he in her, did not arise from any violent or extravagant "first sight" feeling.

The reader, by what he has already seen of the character of Frank Grindle, must have been made aware of the superiority of his mind and principles. Well—introduced (as it would have been better he never had been) to Jane, with whom one hour's conversation was sufficient to establish her claims to respect and esteem, he naturally and involuntarily—nay, rather against his will—becomes satisfied that she is a very charming person—perhaps the most charming person he has yet met with. Supposing this to be all—as it might have been in an ordinary case—here the matter was wholly and totally different. Conscious that out of respect to his father's anxiety, and his brother's seniority, it was his duty not to interfere with George's pretensions, not only his prepossession in favour of the lady was to be controlled and subdued, but his moral conviction that his brother was the last man on earth to be the husband of such a creature was to be over-ruled.

We have seen and heard the sneers and sarcasms with which poor Frank's unobtrusive attempts to moralise, not tediously, boringly, or cantingly, have been received by

Sir George and his eldest son. It must not thence be inferred that Frank was one of those awful humbugs (no other word can reach them) who deprive themselves of all worldly comfort and amusement, refrain from the ordinary imbibitions of wine, and so on. No, not a bit of it—Frank was really and truly a gentleman. His addiction to scientific pursuits—which in the present day are as much a matter of fashion as any thing else, and are frequently taken up by very silly people who fancy themselves wise, because the financial officers of the societies to which they belong, puff them up in order to get their money, or because they puff themselves—was another subject, as we have heard, of the ridicule of his father and brother, who reduced every thing to one standard by a question,—What's the use of it? A man—as Colonel Bruff and a great number of infinitely sillier people (the supposition is difficult) do—goes to a pot-house at Greenwich, and eats whitebait. Well, he eats the fish. What the deuce does it signify to *him* whether it is a young shad or a promising sprat? He drives over Blackheath. What

can it matter to him, sitting in his carriage, what the substratum of the macadamised road is composed of? Who cares one farthing what the difference of temperature is, when, in a balloon, you reach the height of fifteen thousand feet in the air? Nobody can build a house there. Fools, they say, build castles in those regions—but what is the object to be attained? Who cares?

These sort of absurd interrogatories were put by George and his father as answers touching enquiries as to the pursuits of Frank, of whom George said one day to the governor, "I'll put a question to Frank the next time we meet, of what he calls a mixed quantity, that will floor him? How far is it from Christmas-day to Westminster-bridge?"

At this sally the worthy baronet was perfectly delighted, and much confirmed in his opinion that the ascertaining the character and qualities of the land we live in was a matter (as the popular political song of some twenty years ago says) "uncommonly low."

But, as we have just said, what Frank *was*, or was *not*, is not the subject of our present investigation. Where *is* he?—for very much

of our future history depends upon the answer to this question. Whether Sir George and his son were aware of the place of his then present domestication, and thought it—why one could hardly guess—worth their while to conceal it—or were ignorant of it—it is of course, considering the multiplied intrigues at work, quite impossible to say; but of this the reader may rest assured, that Jane Bruff neither had the slightest knowledge of his destination, nor was she possessed of any possible means of ascertaining it. It is only doing justice to that amiable girl for the said reader to feel satisfied upon this point; which, as our story runs, is really an important one.

Now, during the absence of George Grindle with Ellen, Smylar, whose views and objects the reader can perhaps scarcely yet comprehend, began her course of proceeding. We have already found her, strangely enough, taking part with Jane against her father; or rather, we should say, exciting the poor innocent and confiding girl into rebellion against his authority, to which, up to the present crisis, she had not only implicitly bowed—at

least apparently—but which she had always spoken of to Jane as a power not to be either questioned or disputed.

"Well, Miss Jane," said Smylar, one day, after receiving with an extraordinary degree of humility her *orders*,—"well, Miss Jane, have you heard from your devoted George?".

"Yes," said Jane, "I had a letter—a short one—from Paris, which he reached on Thursday evening in safety."

"Oh," said Smylar, "he *is* safe. Well that's a comfort."

"He will be back," he says, "on Wednesday next," said Jane, not exhibiting any very particular signs of satisfaction at the proposition.

"Don't be angry with me," said Smylar, "for asking the question; but have you heard from Mrs. Amersham? You told me the day before yesterday you had written to her. Now, what does *she* say to the proposal of forcing you into the match?"

"I *have* heard from Mrs. Amersham," said Jane—the which Mrs. Smylar knew as well as herself, inasmuch as no letter ever reached an inmate of the colonel's house without un-

dergoing an exceedingly strict investigation, upon which, unless in a hermetically sealed envelope (a contrivance not in general use for the general post, until the marvellous improvements which have recently been made to produce a uniform rate, which varies more curiously and with an infinitely greater degree of intricacy than any postage ever before contrived) every ingenuity and stage trick of which the minx was capable was put into practice to get at its contents.

"And what does she say?" asked Smylar.

"But little," answered Jane, driven as it were unconsciously in her sad seclusion to make a confidant of the woman she felt she least could trust; but, at the same time, deluded into her present course of conduct towards her by the evident change in her manner and sentiments towards herself.

"Ah," said Smylar, "people of the world are always cautious—always afraid of committing themselves—but surely, Miss Jane, she does not advise your submission to the tyranny with which you are threatened?"

"Perhaps," said Jane, "I did not put the case strongly enough?"

"Then whose fault is *that?*" said Smylar, in a tone and style of animation quite new in her character, especially while arguing against the colonel's views. "You can't like the man—and—but I daren't tell you all—this I will say, you ought not to marry him even if you loved him dearly. You hate him—yes, Miss Jane, you do—so there can be no excuse for doing a—I must not say what—but I will say a cruel action."

"Cruel!" said Jane. "How, cruel? What—"

"I tell you you must not ask more about *that*," said Smylar, "but die rather than become the wife of that man."

Now although Jane Bruff certainly had an exceedingly mean opinion of the pretender to her hand, and as certainly did prefer his brother, still when a girl has such an alternative proposed as that of dying or marrying, the most diffident, cold, and even coquettish one in the world would rather go to the altar than the tomb, and Jane ventured to enquire again the particular reason which Smylar had

for the violence of her antipathy towards George Grindle—all in vain.

Now the first answer which Jane had received from Mrs. Amersham was not altogether so satisfactory as she could have wished it to be. The truth is, that when she and her husband had entered into a joint determination that their dear young friend and connection should not marry any body against her will, they were both urged to this earnest compact under the conviction that the man she *did* like was Miles Blackmore; and such is the waywardness of the human mind, that when Jane declared to Emma that it was no prepossession in his favour by which she was actuated in endeavouring to avoid a marriage with George Grindle, Mrs. Amersham's zeal and enthusiasm cooled and calmed, and, in point of fact, her answer was full of truisms and general observations, not unmixed with a little advice in the way of caution, for which Jane was perfectly unprepared. In fact, it was clear that the Amershams were disappointed, and even vexed at her insensibility

to the attractions and qualities of Miles Blackmore; and so for the moment, or rather on the instant, was the milk of her kindness soured.

At such a period naturally arose a crisis which Jane did not anticipate. On the one hand she finds her devoted friend somewhat chilled in her advice and protestations of support against the tyranny to which she had told her she was resolved not to submit; and on the other discovers Smylar, in whom even up to the last, as she told Emma in the letter to which hers was an answer, she suspected a bitter enemy, most anxious, most zealous, and positively determined to use her utmost exertions to rescue her from the martyrdom to which, without her aid, she seemed positively doomed.

It certainly was a critical situation for Jane to be placed in. At one moment she attributed the change in Emma's manner to one cause, in the next to another; but the great danger was that she should in a transport, not of anger, but of disappointment,

put herself so far into the power of Smylar, as to adopt her advice, or accept of her assistance.

That Smylar knew where Frank Grindle was, there seems little doubt; that whenever it was possible to institute a comparison between the brothers, unfavourable to George, she did it, is most true; but she never permitted herself to forward the cause of Frank practically, as one might say—appearing only to hold him out to Jane as a bright contrast to his brother. What her ultimate proceeding was to be, was yet—at least to Jane—quite undefinable. That she *had* a scheme in preparation nobody can doubt, because trained and educated as she had been, the expectation of any thing like truth or sincerity in either her character, or conduct would have been perfectly ridiculous.

Here let us for a moment leave her. Jane had again written to Emma, describing the extraordinary alteration in Smylar's manner, and enclosing George Grindle's letter from Paris as a specimen of his style—a sort of brick from Babylon. The reader perhaps

would like to see it—its brevity will serve as a set-off for its dulness.

" Hôtel Bourbon, — 18—
" Paris.

" My dear Miss Bruff,

" I got here yesterday—deucedly tired and all that—never stopped, except to sleep at Beauvilliers—bad bed—uncomfortable room —and a servant, who by no accident is sharp about such things—restless all night in anxiety to get back—now bothered with lawyers and papers, and all that sort of thing —good hotel—and being here alone and on business only, very snug—dined quietly and so on—I hope to get clear of this the day after to-morrow—I don't know if you like Paris—I used to like it, but you know, thanks to you, that's all changed.

" The journey seemed twice as long as usual—being quite alone bores me—however it gave me more time to think of you—I hope to bring you over some pretty *bijouterie*—the worthy colonel is, I trust, quite well—I have written to my father,

but as we shall soon meet, and I am sure the sooner the better, and I am no great dab at my pen, I will not bore you with any more of my nonsense, only begging you to believe me, my dear Miss Bruff,

"May I say Jane?

"Yours truly and affectionately,

"GEORGE GRINDLE."

The reader ought to know that the graceful writer of this letter never was near the Hôtel Bourbon in Paris, but that it was written at Mrs. Eversfield's at Versailles, and sent into Paris in time for the post, so that the post *mark* might be right. As to his seeing any lawyers, *we* know better than that, as do we also touching his solitary travelling.

As we have shown *this* letter, let us cast our eyes over that to which he alludes in it, as having been addressed to his worthy father, Sir George Grindle, Baronet.

"Versailles,

"——, 18—.

"Dear Governor,

"I think I shall get on, or rather off, un-

common, well—neither she nor her mother has the slightest notion of the truth. I have put them up to believing you to be the most infernal crab of a father that ever crawled, so that they are terrified at your name. She has made up her mind to stay for six months, certain—as for the pledge, of course when things come to be known, he must be taken care of. I wrote to Jane Bruff this morning, full of adoration, after *my* fashion, and all that sort of thing; only I'll just thank you, governor, not to be carrying on there while I am away, for between you, me, and the post, I'll be hanged if I don't think she likes you better than your son and heir—so fair play, that's a jewel.

"I didn't stop in Paris, for reasons—two or three of my *dear* friends are there, who might have asked me for the stumpy due—that, you know, would have been uncommonly inconvenient. I hope to get away in two days, but I must do the decent with poor Nelly and her mother—she has got another daughter, four years younger than Nelly—I say nothing—but I never *did* see—eh, governor?

"You had better give heavy-heeled Bruff

a shove on, as to our marriage; because if it *is* to be, I should like to have it over and settled at the latest in three weeks, because I have promised Henry Flipper to go to him for a week in October, and I should not like to leave Jane till we had been married at least a fortnight. I wish you would say something to her about her hair—she don't do it nice as I like it—she has got a bad maid I think—ugly I know she is—see about this for me, governor. Pitch it into old 'That'll do,' and don't go mad after Mother Smylar—nice connexion, governor—never mind—stumpy's the word,

"Yours affectionately,

"GEORGE GRINDLE.

"P. S. What's gone with Frank?—you needn't answer, for two reasons: the first is, I don't care; and the second is, that if I *did*, I could not hear till I got home."

These were the epistles concocted, propounded, and dispatched on the same day from Versailles, by the all-accomplished Mr. George Grindle.

Now, who can read these letters, and not feel an interest in the fate of the amiable, excellent girl, who is destined to be the wife of the writer, or, in that of the unhappy, beautiful creature, who is doomed to be repudiated?—Yet these are things that *do* take place in the world.

Surrounded by difficulties, and even dangers, as Jane Bruff unquestionably at this period was, she had not the consolation of knowing how deeply two persons were, at the very period, most disinterestedly interested in her happiness. There can be no doubt, whatever the mystery might be in which Miles Blackmore's affection for and devotion to her—for they must both be admitted — were involved, that whatever he could do to serve or save her, would be done by him. Nor is there any reason to question the warmth of Frank Grindle's feelings towards her, and they, as we have already said, were of a twofold character: his admiration of her mind, her person, her qualities, and accomplishments, was fervent and sincere: but all the ardour which such a sentiment was calculated to excite, was doubled by the

dread of her enduring perpetual misery in a union with his brother; knowing at the same moment, that the connexion was the chief object of his father's heart, and that he, of course, of all men in the world, ought not to thwart or oppose it.

Where Frank was, seemed to be a question. What he had said about a sick friend at Leamington, however looked upon as a *ruse*, was in point of fact true. Sir George Grindle, amongst other antipathies, hated with all the force of hatred, his brother-in-law, Mr. Francis Leeson, the maternal uncle and godfather of his son Frank; and strange to say, the kinder this brother-in-law proved himself to his nephew, the more violent became the dislike of Sir George, whose devotion to his first-born blinded him to every thing except his preferment and promotion. In fact, the soreness, or irritation, or whatever it was, or whencesoever arising, had reached such a pitch, that the name of Mr. Leeson was never heard in the family; and whenever Frank went to visit his kind and exemplary relation (and when he did, he rarely men-

tioned the circumstance), his father affected a perfect ignorance of his proceedings.

Now it so happened, that Frank had received a letter from his uncle from Leamington, to which gay and pretty place he had betaken himself, in order to be cured at a railroad pace of all his disorders, by some eminent practitioner there. Not that when we say railroad pace, we mean to insinuate that the practice of the talented gentleman, whoever he might have been, was carried on upon the kill-or-cure system; but after staying there a week or two, he found that the climate, or something (no matter what), disagreed with him, and according to George Colman,

"Week pass'd after week, in weekly succession,
Till his *weakly* condition was past all expression;"

and he quitted the Clarendon Hotel and its comforts for the sea-coast, whither it appears that his affectionate nephew forthwith followed him. So much for *his* destination, which has appeared somehow mystified, but which has not been known to us, simply be-

cause, under the circumstances of the family disagreement to which we have just referred, Sir George himself was not aware of it.

As to George Grindle and Ellen, considering what that amiable young ex-lieutenant of dragoons has imparted to his father, our researches need not be very actively pursued. He, and his fair victim, and "the pledge," arrived safely at the residence of Mrs. Eversfield, which need, perhaps, be no more minutely described, than as being in one of those houses, the back windows of which, to use a French phrase, give to the gardens, or (to use another French phrase) the park of the palace.

There is in the town of Versailles a calmness and silence, over which the palace seems to domineer, and although within ten miles of the capital, it affords a sweet and almost solemn seclusion to those who, like Mrs. Eversfield and her daughters, were forced to live on the continent, enlivened and cheered chiefly by the *agrémens* derivable from the enjoyment of the walks in the royal domain.

And now, says the reader, who is Mrs. Eversfield?—and who, and what are her

daughters?—for it has been seen that she has two. What manner of woman can *she* be, who sanctions the intimacy and intercourse between Ellen and George Grindle, and who receives her back again into her house, in order that she may make it a temporary residence? That question cannot, perhaps, yet be conveniently answered—but such things have happened before. That her second daughter was even handsomer than her elder sister, appears in evidence from George's letter to his worthy father. What was *she* intended for? Mrs. Eversfield was visited, and had little *eau sucrée soirées;* she was exceedingly regular in her religious duties; there was no scandal about her house, or rather her *étage;* and when Ellen returned, she was not only received with the sincerest blessings and most affectionate embraces, but a little *réunion* was made for the evening, so that some of her young friends whom she had left at Versailles might add their congratulations upon her return.

All this was bitterly painful to George. There is a dreadful feeling by which a man conscious of a double-purpose is inevitably

visited. He saw this joyous, innocent merry-making—he saw his child handed from one to another of Mrs. Eversfield's friends and neighbours—praised for his beauty and admired for his precocity—and what then?—every word of approbation, which ought to have rung joyously in the ears of a father, struck discordantly upon his; the child they admired he was about to abandon; the mother they felicitated, he was on the point of repudiating.

Ellen's pleasure at meeting with her old associates, and the absolute delight which she felt in again finding herself pressed to her mother's affectionate heart, had excited her, and raised her spirits to a pitch which they had not latterly attained. This natural and surely excusable alteration of manner, at once gratified and soured our amiable ex-lieutenant of dragoons. He felt jealous that she should seem happy when he was so soon to quit her, and pleased that she was so charmed with the society to which in four-and-twenty hours he meant to abandon her—FOR EVER!

The strangeness of mankind, the perverse-

ness of human nature, could not, perhaps, be more strongly illustrated than in this very case. Determined as he was upon this eternal separation, the sight of Miles Blackmore's stick, as handed by Ellen to Tiney, seemed to awaken feelings which every reasonable person could not fail to think wholly incompatible with the views and intentions which unquestionably occupied his mind, when he mentioned the name and address of her mother to the owner of the said stick at Abbeville.

We have little to keep us long at Versailles. We are not there for pleasure. We have not visited it to criticise the repairs of the palace by the present King of the French; or to contrast them with the original taste and design of Louis Quatorze; or trace the prevalence of the prejudices of Louis Dixhuit in favour of England, in the alterations he made in its gardens. We are merely there on business, and that—more the sorrow and shame—but brief.

It was delightful to see, even under the impending affliction of parting from George, how happy Ellen seemed at being again in

the society and under the roof of her mother —the way she clung to her, as it were, during the evening—the security with which she clasped her hands in hers, and the gaiety with which she danced a quadrille, with George as her partner, while Tiney, to whom such diversions were a perfect novelty, laughed until he almost cried, at the music and the *quadrillers*.

While this is going on, we must again glance hastily to Harley-street, inasmuch as the period of George's absence was that during which Mrs. Smylar proposed to carry *her* great scheme into execution.

Jane, when we last left her, was expecting another letter from Emma Amersham, in answer to one which she had written her, expressive of something like disappointment at the tone of hers—the one about which Mrs. Smylar had been so solicitous. She received the second letter, and thus it ran:

"——, —18—

"Dearest Jane,

"You write to me as if you were dissatisfied with my last letter to you. My sweet

girl, you must surely see and appreciate the difficulty which I have—and I have consulted the plain good sense of my husband too—in advising any step which must inevitably bring you into direct hostility with your father.

"May you not, dear Jane, as you have so solemnly protested that your heart was free and disengaged, have formed too hasty an opinion of this Mr. Grindle? Mr. Amersham has made some enquiries about him from some of his single friends, and there seems nothing objectionable in his character. He is gay—of that you will cure him; he is young—in that respect, time will improve him; but I do think that you have taken too strong a prejudice against him.

"If—and here I revert to my original position—if you had been, as I always did think you were, sufficiently pleased with a certain gentleman who shall now be nameless, to have declared in his favour, I would, as I have already said, have fought your battle with papa; but as that is not the case—as your position in the world is not as agreeable as it might be—why not resolve, not to

rush into a connexion of so serious a character rashly or hastily, but to look more calmly, and if I may say so, Jane, more reasonably at the proposition.

"Knowing nothing of your feelings, except negatively, I cannot of course sympathise with you *if* any thing has occurred since we parted to influence your affections. As the matter comes before me, I honestly confess I cannot understand the cause of your apparent resolution to disobey your father.

"Write to me, dearest Jane—tell me all—be entirely what you ever were before,—candid and sincere, and give me better reasons than those you have hitherto sent me, for rejecting this young man. Of one thing assure yourself, that in me and my husband you will ever find two firm and unflinching friends, and that we are both—for *he* is standing by me while I write—your most affectionate,

"J. & E. AMERSHAM."

It must be confessed, that as a sequel to the letter with which Jane had been disap-

pointed, this was by no means consolatory. It seemed to *her* to have been dictated by the feelings to which we have ourselves before referred—that if she did not marry Miles Blackmore, it became a matter of indifference to the Amershams whom she married, and with such a feeling their persuasions were naturally in favour of the lover of her father's selection. In all probability Jane's views would have coincided with theirs, and she would have argued *filially* with herself in their favour; but unfortunately during the interval between the receipt of these two epistles, she had permitted herself to listen to the counsels of Smylar, and that too with the conviction of her treachery strong upon her mind. The truth is, that such a girl as Jane had no chance in the world against the cunning of the housekeeper. The coldness, as Jane felt it, of her dear friend Emma, was unfortunately contrasted with the warmth and energy of her (in fact) inveterate enemy; and urged by a thousand contending feelings to which her heart had hitherto been a stranger, she suffered herself to be soothed and encouraged

by the specious menial, until unconsciously she found herself in open rebellion against the father whom, to this hour, she had piously and implicitly obeyed.

"I think, Miss Jane," said Smylar, "that Mrs. Amersham, although she *is* your friend, is afraid of advising you for the best, or perhaps has been written to by the colonel on the subject."

This remark will serve to announce to the reader the fact that Jane had proceeded so far in her downward course of confidential communications, as to have shown Mrs. Smylar the letter.

"Still," said Jane, "all she says is true, and just, and right."

"Why perhaps," said Smylar, "if she or her husband knew all I know, they might not think so; but this I know—and know it to my cost—a marriage of hands without hearts, is certain misery. I could instance in my own case the sorrows it produces, the dangers in which it involves both parties, and in most instances—not in mine, thank Providence—the disgrace it entails upon them. Besides, the brother of this man who, except

as far as the title goes, is worth ten of him, is, to say the least, agreeable to you—the little you have seen of his manners and conversation you like—why should the colonel force you to marry the other?"

"With my father," said Jane, "although not with *me*, the title is an object. But I go further than this—why force me to marry at all?"

"To be sure," said Smylar, "why indeed—why shouldn't you remain as you are, the prop of his declining age, the mistress of his home and his comfort?"

"Perhaps," said Jane, flattering herself that she was playing a deep game with her skilful antagonist,—"perhaps my father may have some intention of marrying again, and hence his anxiety for my settlement in the world."

"Marry again!" said Smylar, with a look expressive of the consummate absurdity of such a supposition—"No, I should think not—no, rely upon it, *that* is not the reason—*I* know better than that—the only advice I can give you, and I give it with all sincerity and truth, is not to marry Mr. George Grindle."

"But how avoid it," said Jane, "if my father presses it?"

"*If* he presses it," said Smylar; "why I have heard that as he is at present resolved, he means the marriage to take place next Thursday week."

"What?" said Jane, "even the day fixed without either my consent or knowledge, and that too before I have even conditionally accepted the offer?"

"So I hear," said Smylar, "and the way I heard it, was through the tradesmen, who have been ordered to have every thing in readiness by that day, or rather the day before."

"This is proceeding rapidly," said Jane.

"That's what I mean, dear," said Smylar, gloating with a fiendlike satisfaction on the countenance of poor Jane, characterized as it was by anxiety as to the course she should adopt, and of gratitude to her companion for her information, and warm solicitude for her escape from eternal wretchedness.

"No time is to be lost," continued Smylar, "nor should you hesitate. Your friends, Mr. and Mrs. Amersham, are no doubt exceed-

ingly happy themselves, and perhaps wish to avoid anything like interference with your father's views or wishes: but you can any day of your life force them into upholding you, if the colonel persists in his determination."

"How can *that* be done?" said Jane, her eyes beaming with a hope of alleviation of her distress.

"Trust *me*, when the time comes," said Smylar, "and never fear. When the colonel mentions his immovable resolve about the match, and the day fixed for the marriage, resist him—that is, I advise only as I should myself act under similar circumstances. The result of your opposition will be his anger, and will most probably strengthen his firmness, and perhaps hurry his intended conclusion of the affair—that will produce a crisis—at that moment my counsel will be available to you; act upon *that*, and every thing will turn out as you wish."

"But will this occur through your influence over my father?" said Jane.

"*My* influence!" answered Smylar. "You will continue to labour under that mistake

into which you and your friend Mrs. Amersham, I know, have fallen, upon the subject of my influence over your father. I may influence his selection of a dinner when he dines at home; I may induce him to take care of himself when he goes out; but in matters of a family nature, what have I to do, but obey his orders? Only when I see things in progress, which I have every reason to expect will turn out ill, I feel myself justified in doing good to others, as I should hope and wish that they would do good to me."

"Still, Smylar, I do not understand—" said Jane.

"Never mind *that*," interrupted her companion; "perhaps your father *may* relent when he sees you firm—I confess that it is not very likely;—but if he should not, it will be then quite time enough for me to make my suggestion."

The colonel's well-known knock at the street-door here put an end to the dialogue between Jane and her new ally, who had, as it is evident, already succeeded in weaning her confidence from the Amershams to her-

self, in spite of Jane's experience of her character, and conviction of her duplicity. Still divided as she was between her belief in her ability, and in the influence over her father, which she so resolutely denied, the near approach of the threatened event drove her as it were into her power. The cause of all this may be discovered in the simple fact, that Jane had never loved before. The peculiarity of the relative positions between the loved one and the one abhorred, gave new spirit to her hatred, and thus acted upon almost unconsciously, yet as she felt too powerfully, by two contending passions, she fled for succour into the arms of the harpy whose sole object was her ruin and destruction, because her advice and suggestions were more in accordance with her excited feelings, and her view of the dangers and difficulties of the case, more consonant with her hopes and wishes than those of her dear and sincere friends, the Amershams.

As the saying goes, "There are spots on the sun," and scarcely can a diamond be found without a flaw. The whole head and front of Jane's offending, was her sensitive

dread of admitting to her dearest friend Emma the weakness, as she had always hitherto held it, of falling in love—and that too as it must necessarily appear upon the face of her admission—of falling in love at first sight. Had they been domesticated together in their ordinary habits of intimacy and familiarity, there is no doubt that the important secret would have been disclosed; indeed, with Jane's ingenuousness of character and countenance, concealment from her friend when *with* her, would have been impossible. But to write—to record the real state of the case, and admit that so shortly, nay, so immediately after their separation, she could have formed a serious attachment for an almost stranger—was more than Jane could muster courage to do. She had spoken of him favourably in her letters to Emma, but not more than once, and then casually, as instituting a comparison between his manners and conversation and those of his brother; nor had her feelings towards him then acquired the strength which his absence, and the constant effect of contrast produced by the presence of George, had

since given them. She felt that she would give the world to pass one day with the Amershams; but she was almost sure her father would refuse her the favour; and while she was thinking over in her mind whether she should ask him to let her go to them, Mrs. Smylar, opportunely or inopportunely, as the case may be, contrived to insinuate *herself* into the poor girl's good graces, and divert her interests, if not her affections, from the Amershams.

The reader may easily imagine that the change made by Jane in her counsellor is not likely to turn out to her advantage. Perhaps he may also anticipate the object that counsellor has in view. How she sets to work to accomplish it, will be seen in our next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

"WELL, dear George," said Ellen; "I feel happy, even in the midst of my sorrow at losing you. You will be safer from the tyrant governor, as you call him, and *I* shall wait in hope, always beaming hope, dear George, to find you released—somehow, but how I can scarcely tell—from the difficulties in which I feel but too deeply I have contributed to involve you."

"You are a trump, Nelly," said George, "and don't trouble yourself about involvements. I'm *ra*ther bogged, as we say at Melton; but take my word for it, I'll be out and clear before long, and then—"

"Then," interrupted Ellen, "you will

come back to me and our dear boy. When —when do you think there will be a chance of seeing you?"

"Why," said George, looking first upwards, and then downwards, and then mysteriously, the whole history of his nearly-approaching marriage revolving in his mind at the moment—"why, I can't say to a week or so — because, you see, I have promised myself to two or three country-houses, and I like shooting—and the people there like *me*—and—"

"Why should they not like you?" said Ellen, pressing his arm; "and why should you not enjoy your shooting if you like *that?* Dear George, I am not selfish—I am happy in the highest degree of happiness when you are with me; but I am not unhappy when you are away, if I feel sure that you yourself are happy where you are."

"Poor Nell!" said George.

"But," continued she, "do—do be back by the fifth of October — that *is*, if you can."

"What's the fifth of October?" said

George. "I have heard the old song, which says,

"'Remember, remember,
The fifth of November;'

but what the deuce is the fifth of October?"

"Have you forgotten?" said Ellen, looking anxiously in his face; "you never forgot it before."

"Gone," said George, "all blank — no notion."

"Why, *my* dear George," said she, "it is our Tiney's birthday—he will be four years old next October. Come, come, you are only joking—you did not forget it—it was only to tease me you said so. Wherever we have been, you never allowed any engagement to interfere with your dining at home on *that* day. You really are *too* bad, George."

And she pushed him playfully from her. All this dialogue occurred while they were walking round the basin of Neptune—Tiney as usual running before them.

"Why," said George, "as to October—oh! I do recollect now—yes—but it will

interfere deucedly with the first burst of pheasants—still—"

"Pheasants?" said Ellen: "but there have been pheasants and *battues* every year since Tiney was born—still you have contrived to be with us.

"Yes," answered the amiable gentleman, "that's true; but then you know we were in England. *There* one may spare a day from shooting to perform the duties of paternity, and play pappy, as you say—but in France—I—"

"We were in France before," said Ellen, "on Tiney's birthday; you didn't mind the pheasants *then*."

"No—no," said Mr. Grindle, "not as to pheasants. The fact is—I don't much care—but—"

And here came into his mind a notion of at once breaking the whole truth to her; but no—he had not courage to endure her reproaches, or perhaps to witness her agonies, and so he went on.

"But the places to which I am going this year, are of what may be called the sober

order. I think of giving myself a dose, in order that I may do some good with the governor."

"Do," said Ellen, "whatever is best for yourself; and when I say so, I feel that I advise you not without selfishness; for whatever is good for *you*, must be eventually good for *me* and our dear child. But go, George—go where you choose—do not let a fond mother's prejudices draw you hither upon any particular day. If I know your heart, I know that the first glass of wine you drink after dinner on the fifth of October, will be drunk silently to the health and happiness of that dear little child, the very likeness of yourself."

"Do they say he is like *me?*" said George.

"Do you not see it yourself?" said Ellen.

"Can't say I do," said the affectionate parent. "I think he's an uncommon pretty pup."

"Oh!" said the confiding girl, "how you talk, George."

And now here is the mischief of this affair. If George had been one of the pink and white faced fiddle-faddle, low puppies,

qualified by all their personal and mental qualities to figure behind the counters of Messrs. Howell and James, or Messrs. Swan and Edgar, and had been pursuing the heartless course which we too well know has been adopted by our present friend, it would not have mattered half so much. To be sure, in that case he most probably would not have succeeded in the first instance, with Ellen; but if George had not, with all his frivolities and pretensions to a place in class B of legitimate dandyism, had talent of a certain character, accomplishments to a certain extent, and conversational powers of a certain quality, he never could have so deeply interested his victim, as the reader, knowing all he does know, must regret to see that he has effectually done. If *she* had felt equally indifferent towards him—if she, in fact, had *not* loved him—their eternal separation might have been a wise and salutary proceeding for both of them; but *we* know the difference—we know that she, devoted to him, believed him to be the most devoted, affectionate, and honourable of human beings.

But now, of Mrs. Eversfield and Ellen's

younger sister—who was she—or who were they ? as Macbeth says,

"What are these ?"

Here comes a difficulty. Mrs. Eversfield was a widow; she had resided at Versailles for six years. She was the mother of Ellen, and of course of Ellen's sister, and certainly under all the circumstances of the case, the extraordinary *liaison* between one of her girls with Mr. George Grindle, the existence of Tiney, and the quiet, yet highly-respectable manner in which the lady—in other days it might have been considered decent to call her old lady—lived, and "received" in the evenings, to her coffee and *eau sucrée*, in her exceedingly pretty salon and boudoir, require some explanation. But the historian is himself at fault, and whatever his anxiety may be to enlighten the reader, he is at this period of his narrative wholly incapacitated from doing so, for the strongest of all possible reasons—he knows nothing.

No—the history of all the persons before us, developing itself only gradually and, as it were, chronologically, the time has not yet

arrived when we can get at the truth of rumours, which certainly were prevalent at Versailles, the premature mention of which might, if it did not injure the interests of the parties concerned, damage those of the narrative.

The following morning was fixed for George's departure. The little *soirée* at Mrs. Eversfield's, which was a sort of commonplace, or rather every-night occurrence, inasmuch as the evening promenaders came in just as they had been walking, was to Ellen sad and sorrowful; even George, as it grew later, began to feel less lively, or perhaps it might be better to say, the hardness of his cruel heart was in some degree softened as the hour of going approached. A quiet discerner of effects certainly might have perceived a kind of shudder through his frame as he kissed the forehead of Tiney, when his *bonne* came to take him to bed. Ellen saw it, and blessed her loved one for his paternal feeling.

"George," said she, "don't mind: you shall see him again before you go."

Poor Ellen!

If, as most truly they are, partings are

pangs to the parting parties themselves, it does not seem absolutely necessary to inflict upon the reader the details of that which occurred on the morning of the day following this scene. The grief of Ellen, earnest and sincere as it was, was qualified by the belief that the temporary separation would be beneficial to her beloved, and by the certainty of possessing her adored child. His seriousness—for it amounted to little more than that—arose from the consciousness of his real views and intentions, acted upon at the crisis by feelings which even *he* could not entirely control when parting from the once-worshipped idol of his heart—the mother of his child. This conflict, perceptible enough in his countenance and manner, convinced Ellen of the earnestness of his affection for her; and when the last farewell kiss had been exchanged, it was with confidence and certainty that she said, or rather sobbed, "Remember Tiney's birthday."

Mrs. Eversfield had a difficult task to perform in soothing her amiable daughter after George's departure; and the sports of Tiney, yet too young to miss his father's presence,

while dear mamma remained, only aggravated her grief. However he was soon dispatched with his *bonne* into the gardens, where he took "stick" exercise upon the still-favourite cane of Mr. Miles Blackmore, until it was time for him to have his dinner.

George had some reason to be vain of his own importance. By his departure from Versailles and his consequent approach to London, he was causing the deepest pain to two charming girls—the one, to be sure, standing in an exceedingly different position from the other. Jane shone in all the mild purity of truth and virtue; Ellen with equally good qualities, with a devoted and affectionate heart, and who, in all the accomplishments of the world, might successfully vie with her unconscious rival, was sullied by a cloud—an incomprehensible history had marred her fate and darkened her prospects. How this should have happened, as it evidently *had* happened, under the sanction, or if not under the sanction, at least with the knowledge and connivance of her mother, still living in esteem and respect at Versailles, sounds at first strange and startling; but it may be, that

whatever Mrs. Eversfield's motives were for sanctioning, as it is by this time quite evident she did, such a connexion for her daughter, they did not necessarily interfere with her personal respectability, in her present residence, so long as her daughter appeared under her roof as the wife of the eldest son of an English baronet, by whose name she was *there* invariably addressed. In the Regent's Park she was Mrs. Greenford, and this *alias* had been of course by her own consent adopted, in order to render her and George secure from any tyrannical measures of "the governor."

Jane had received a second letter from her hopeful intended, and was therefore fully prepared for his arrival; nor was she rendered at all easier in her mind by a professional interview which she was directed to have with the colonel's solicitor—the precise purport or intention of which she did not clearly understand at the time it took place, farther than that it was really and truly an actual preliminary to all that she most dreaded upon earth.

"Jenny," said the colonel, after their *tête-*

à-tête dinner that day, "I think Sir George and I have settled all our matters, and there will be little now left but signing and sealing. George will be back to-morrow, or at farthest the day after, and we propose Monday week for the wedding."

"Sir!" said Jane, pale and trembling.

"Yes," continued Bruff, "we had first thought of Thursday, but the things cannot be got ready—the law's delays, and all *that* —and the coachmaker—and—"

"But Monday week!" said Jane; "for whose wedding?"

"Why, yours to be sure," answered the colonel.

"Oh, father!" said Jane—

"That'll do—that'll do," interrupted the father, "no crying—no nonsense. What must be, must—you must be *My Lady*—I like it—*my* will is law—no snivelling."

"But," said Jane, "I have made no preparations."

"What d'ye mean by preparations?" said the colonel; "you have got gowns and bonnets, and all the rest of it—it makes me sick to hear of fine dresses, and all other matters

of that sort being bought, because a girl is going to be married;—just as if she had lived without clothes all the time she was single—it's all nonsense—what the French call a *corbilly* or some such stuff."

"But, really," said Jane—

"That'll do—no nonsense," said Bruff. "Monday week by half-past ten o'clock you will be Mrs. Grindle."

A sudden tremour thrilled through the poor girl's frame; save and except that she was not a fine lady, she would have fainted; against the oppression she felt on her heart amidst the darkening mist which almost veiled her eyes, she struggled, and struggled successfully.

"I will leave you now, sir," said Jane, "the lights are in the drawing-room—I cannot argue—but—let me write to you—let me implore—"

"Stuff!" said the colonel. "Write! why write and waste paper?—better talk and waste words—it is all of no use—I *am* your father, and will be obeyed."

Saying which, he rang the bell for the servants with a violence well suited to an occa-

sion in which "*ringing a belle*," in another sense of the words, was the object of discussion.

It was usual, as we know, in that family, for Mrs. Smylar to superintend the colonel's single cup of coffee, taken by him in the dining-room previous to his going up stairs; although that lady would have denied the fact (no doubt upon oath, had it been necessary); and, as usual, no sooner had Jane been served with coffee in the boudoir, than Smylar proceeded to administer the accustomed beverage to the colonel. Jane, at the same time, sitting down to fulfil her intention of addressing a written appeal to her father against his hasty decision with regard to the marriage, hoped that she could say more in writing than she could by speaking to him, and that too with no chance of the abrupt interruption to which her oral pleadings would have been liable.

"Smylar," said the colonel, when the Hebe had placed the odorous draught before her Jove,—"sit down, Smylar—I want to say a few words to you. Is the outer-door fast?"

"Close as wax, colonel," said the lady.

"Well, then," said Bruff, "the fact is, this girl of mine is running restive—rusty I used to call it—she hums and haws to the marriage—cries—turns pale—and what she calls 'implores me'—eh? and as for Monday week—oh, 'the time is so short'—'the proposal so abrupt'—that won't do, Smylar—I have, I believe, but one peculiarity in my character—it's not an uncommon one—I *will* have my way—when I say a thing shall be done, it shall be done."

"You are quite right, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar.

"That'll do," said the colonel, "you're on *my* side then. Well now, don't you think—for you know with all my anxiety about this match, and that sort of thing, and getting her settled, so that we may probably manage matters more economically afterwards, and all that—you know—eh? you see—ha—ha—ha."

"Oh, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar; "naughty colonel—I'm sure I don't in the least understand what you mean—but—"

"That'll do," said Bruff, chuckling and

pinching the delicate *patella* of his fair companion, "never mind what's to follow; but I see no objection to the match—I say to myself, it's a good match—a suitable match—eh? and a deucedly nice young fellow."

"Nice!" said Smylar; "why, my dear colonel, if Miss Jane were to look round all London, she couldn't find a nicer. He is handsome—exceedingly agreeable, as you say—he has a certain rank—a certain fortune, and is, as they say, in a certain circle—what can she want more?"

"That's it," said Bruff—"that's what I can quite fathom—there's something—eh? some other attachment."

"It is quite impossible for me to say," said Smylar; "for I would sooner die than speak to Miss Jane on the subject. Indeed, I don't think she likes me sufficiently to permit me to touch upon it, even if I wished. But this I *do* say, that with such prospects before her, and such a desirable connexion, I would, if I were you, say it must be done—you *shall* marry Mr. Grindle, or out of my house you go!"

"That'll do," said Bruff: "just what I

mean to say—just as if you had dived into my mind and raked out my thoughts—and so she shall; and look, in the midst of all this, she never backs up her own dislike to this match with any remonstrances or conditions from her dear friend, Mrs. Amersham."

"How *can* she?" said Smylar; "depend upon it, if we—I beg pardon—if you knew the truth, you would find that these very people are in favour of her complying with your wishes about the marriage. Why, it is obviously for her advantage; a girl brought up without the protection of a mother—a girl full of delicacy and feeling—doesn't it stand to reason that her settlement in life as the wife of such a person as the future Sir George Grindle is an object of first-rate importance?"

"All right, Smylar, all right," said Bruff; "that'll do—you are so clear—all straightforward—see ahead."

"Why," said Smylar, "it is in *our* craft—for I still fancy I smell the lamp—the system to render the history of human life condensed into two acts; one of successful deception

upon parents, and a consequent result, no matter how attained, in which the old people are first duped, and then brought to concession and forgiveness and the matter generally ends with a song or a dance. In real life, the unities are perhaps better preserved, and not having, my dear colonel, the slightest feeling one way or another, disconnected with your interests, and those of your dear, interesting daughter, I would say, "do a little wrong, to do a great right,' and force her if necessary to the furtherance of her own advantage, and the security of her own happiness, by insisting upon this marriage."

"I mean *that*," said Bruff; "from *that*, the main point, nothing shall divert me; but, as to time—Monday-week—do you see what I mean?—it may hurry her. She is a shy, weak, and, as I take it, a silly creature—but if we were to put it off—a week or two, or so—eh?"

"Wrong, colonel, wrong," said Smylar; "the longer time you give her for deliberation, the worse your chance; besides, at the end of that lengthened term you will still have to force her, and *I* should say with less

chance of softening her feelings towards yourself: force is force, and from what you say, I conclude that you *must* force her into this match. Well! what *can* it signify whether she is forced into compliance on Monday-week or Monday-month?"

"That'll do;" said Bruff; "no—you are right—every thing will be ready—carriage, settlements, all. You'll hurry the milliners, and all that sort of thing. I am sure you are right, Smylar—as you always are. Monday-week *shall* be the day, and as to her appeal, I won't hear it."

"Why," said Smylar, "of course, I have the highest regard for Miss Jane, but if you *have* made up your mind, it is only irritating yourself to read what she may write. I—"

—"But," interrupted Bruff, "do you never talk to her on these subjects?"

"Me! colonel," said Smylar; "me! as I have told you over and over again, I believe that Miss Jane would sooner consult any one of the housemaids upon her affairs than me! No—she hates me too cordially—a bad return, perhaps, for my solicitous care for her;

but, still, all people, you know, must have their likings and dislikings."

"Ha, ha," said the colonel, again practically exemplifying *his* view of *likings*, by another gentle pressure upon the lady's knee. "She is a simpleton—eh? silly girl—not alive to her own interests; but I wonder, after what I said about giving her hints and gentle suggestions, that you hadn't done a little to forward the affair."

"Why," said Smylar, "I *have* done a little, and *that* little quite as much as I felt I could do. I have praised Mr. George to her, and said what an uncommon nice-looking person he was, and then I thought she snubbed me; and you know I have no opportunities of talking to her."

"Well," said Bruff, "I'll give you one this evening—I will not go up stairs—I'll go to the Doldrum—I want to see Sir George, and—I want a little quiet, and so—look here; when I am gone—I shan't announce my going—you go to her, and you—but I needn't tell you what to say. Put her mind in the right way, and get the matter done;

and *then*—" This sentence here abruptly terminated by another gentle pinch of the patella.

"Why," said Smylar (throwing up those brilliant eyes, which in other days had martyred walking-gentlemen, scene-shifters, and link-boys), "why, what *can* I say? It is hard to turn a young heart from its affections, colonel—indeed, if farther advanced in life, the devotion to one object becomes a matter of—"

Hereabouts Mrs. Smylar looked sentimental, and crocodilized a ready-prepared tear. The colonel looked at her, first without, and then with his spectacles, and then giving a third pinch at the patella, said,

"That'll do—that'll do."

"And *I*," said Smylar, "will do all I can in this business; for I am sure it would be the very best thing that could happen; and as I said before, if you have fixed Monday-week, why shouldn't it *be* Monday-week? all the postponements in the world are of no use, if the affair is to come off."

"That'll do," said Bruff; "so now I'll march myself down to the club. My absence

will give you a seasonable opportunity for talking to the girl—and then to-morrow morning—I don't suppose I shall see you again to-night—you'll tell me what has happened—report progress, as they say in the House of Commons, and ask leave—which *you* need never do, to 'sit again to-morrow.'"

"Hadn't you better have the carriage?" said Smylar.

"Carriage!" exclaimed the gigantic colonel. "What are my legs made for, but to carry me? No, no, the walk does me good: so you make your retreat—then I shall ring for my cloak—march off—and in the interim you will just instil *my* notions, which are yours too, into Miss Jenny's mind—she's an obstinate jade, but she must knock under, you know; when I *am* determined, I am not to be beaten."

And so Mrs. Smylar took leave for the purpose of entering upon her embassy. Whether she and the colonel shook hands at parting, or whether he exacted the salute due to his military rank from so civil a servant as his ringleted housekeeper, it is impossible to surmise—she went *her* way. He

rang his bell, and having been duly cloaked, paraded the pavement with all the dignity of a field-marshal, till he reached the door of the Doldrum.

Ten minutes after the departure of the illustrious bore, saw Smylar standing at the right hand of Jane, who had nearly concluded her written appeal to the said bore, which appeal still lay open before her, waiting only for some of those pointings, and dottings, and dashings, which invariably distinguish the literary productions of ladies.

"Is that *you*, Smylar?" said Jane, her eyes almost *mist*ified (not mystified) by the atmosphere of a London room, in what would perhaps by some people be still called a summer's evening, but which others might fancy was growing somewhat autumnal.

"Yes, Miss Jane," said Smylar: "Taylor told me that the colonel was gone out, and so knowing you were alone I just came in to see if there was any thing you wanted."

"Not I," said Jane; "the one sole object of my thoughts is this approaching marriage. I know your opinion, not only of the seemingly needless hurry in the matter, but I

know your opinion of the man. Now, Smylar, I have written to my father, because I know I never should be able to speak my remonstrances against this proceeding, upon which depends the misery or comfort of my future life."

"Poor dear Miss Jane," said Smylar, "how I do feel for you, recollecting what I myself have suffered!"

"Read *that*, Smylar," said Jane; "do you think it will have any effect upon my father? —if it has not, what upon earth can I say more?"

Smylar, glorying in her triumph, her eyes sparkling with delight, took the paper, and read:—

"Dearest Father,

"From the earliest days of my existence which I can remember, to the present moment, the whole study and object of my life have been to obey your commands, and ever, as I hope and trust, to anticipate your will and your wishes. I cannot reproach myself with a single act of disobedience, nor, if it be possible, will I yet be guilty of one:

therefore is it, dearest father, that with the greatest reliance upon your affection, and in the firm hope of your justice, I implore and entreat you to relax your present command as regards your final disposal of me—your last transfer of me, from your paternal care and protection at a period so rapidly approaching as that which you have fixed for my marriage.

"My heart, my dear father, is devoted to you—my whole object is the fulfilment of all your expectations; but indeed, indeed, this trial is too severe—the decision too sudden. I have told you candidly and unreservedly, that, whatever may be the merits of Mr. George Grindle, I cannot duly appreciate them, nor, were I more susceptibly alive to them, have I, according to my own feelings, been sufficiently associated with him, to do either those or myself justice.

"It may be possible — although do not, my dear sir, think that I believe it is—that upon further acquaintance, the views I now take may be changed, and that I may learn to esteem Mr. Grindle, and so far regulate my feelings as to induce an obedience to

your will. At present, death would be preferable to me, compared with a marriage with that gentleman.

"Having said this, my dearest father, let me again urge upon you the needless cruelty of forcing me into *any* marriage. I seek no such connexion. I am quite happy. Allow me, when you wish either to leave town without me, or remain in town when you wish *me* to leave it, to go to the Amershams, who are always kindly glad to receive me, and in whose hospitable house I am always happy. Dearest father, you may trust me. I have no object in declining what you now press upon me—no prior attachment—no idea whatever of counteracting your views, or thwarting your designs in any respect—all I implore you is, to leave me as I am. I pledge you my honour and my duty, which never up to this period have wavered, that no human being shall ever obtain an influence over me, nor be permitted even to attempt to do so, without your being instantly apprised of it; that I never will admit into my heart or mind, or cherish one thought or feeling regarding any human being without

your sanction and approbation. All I ask, and I ask it on my knees, is, do not force me into that which, as I have said before, is to *me* more dreadful than death itself.

"At present, what I seek for is time, and that request surely you will grant me on the score of delicacy. Mr. George Grindle, who is destined in ten or eleven days to become my husband, has never even made a proposal to me, tending in the slightest degree to the point which you inform me authoritatively it is his object to attain. So that, as far as I am personally concerned, I am up to this moment uninformed even of his wishes or intentions upon the subject.

"But oh! my dear, dear father, do let me entreat you, again and again, to stay your hand before you inflict this blow. I ask nothing of you—I will ask nothing of you. I want no fortune. I never will seek a fortune at your hands. All I implore is, that you will allow me to remain single until circumstances effect a change in my views and feelings, or an attachment, such as you shall fully approve, may induce me to throw myself upon your kindness and consideration in

forming a matrimonial connexion. Pray, pray, dearest, dearest father, grant me this negative favour. I ask for nothing—I ask only to be spared a sacrifice which must cost me my happiness, perhaps my life.

"Yours devotedly, dutifully, and affectionately,

"JANE BRUFF."

"Very effective indeed," said Smylar, as she laid the paper down on the table; "not above two lengths and a half, and, I should say, a dead hit."

Jane, to whom the technical jargon of the playhouse was Hebraic, did not at once comprehend that the great geniuses of the lamp —not the genii—measure the manuscripts of their parts in plays by what they call lengths, consisting of so much copy, and that the word effective is applied to any thing likely to be what the heroines of the sawdust and orange-peel school, call a "hit." Smylar was quite alive to the force of the remonstrance, and most anxious to recommend Jane to transmit it, and accordingly counselled her

to lose no time in letting her father receive it.

"But," said Jane, "do you think he really *will* attend to it—will he soften his harsh determination?"

"I should say yes," said Smylar, "but—and that is what vexes me,—since you have told me all your feelings—what vexes me is, the coldness of your friends the Amershams. I am sure, quite sure, that you ought not to mind the alteration in Mrs. Amersham's tone; you ought to cultivate *them;* they are strong allies to fall back upon."

"But," said Jane, "they have repulsed me upon this point. If my father would give me time—if two or three months were suffered to elapse—if I could see and again associate with my friend, Mrs. Amersham, I *do* think every thing would come right. But they seem to cast me off, just as my father is most urgent for a decision; and what to do I do not know."

"Do not break with your friends the Amershams," said Smylar; "I repeat they are powerful allies to fall back upon."

"Well," said Jane; "you *did* say so, but

what do you mean? If I am forced into this marriage, of what service can friends and allies be to me afterwards?"

"What, indeed!" said Smylar. "But supposing, Miss Jane, you made up your mind *not* to marry this Mr. George Grindle —would they not be serviceable and useful then?"

"But how, Smylar?" said Jane; "how do you mean? make up my mind to disobey my father, and positively reject the offer?"

"I mean," said Smylar—"and you will forgive my constantly referring to my own case—that if the colonel—perhaps he may not—but if he persisted in this odious match —*I* call it odious—I would do any thing rather than submit to his tyranny."

"But what could I do?" said Jane.

"Why, Jane," said Smylar, looking at her with one of those devoted, affectionate looks, which nobody but such a person as Mrs. Smylar could have conjured up, without one spark of feeling to engender it—"why, there *is* a way of avoiding it."

"How?—tell me," said Jane.

"We used to act," said Smylar, "when I

was the heroine at Bullock's-smithy, a farce written by one of our best modern dramatists, called 'We Fly by Night;' it was always well received, and if well acted, always went off with great *éclat*."

"Well?" said Jane, pausing for something more.

Now actors and actresses, intimately conversant as they themselves are with every thing theatrical, whether names of pieces, cant terms of the stage, or quotations from the parts which they have themselves performed, imagine a man or a woman who does not at the first hint "*take*" (as they call it) an allusion to the theatre or its affairs, to be a sort of unenlightened and even unworthy member of society.

So with Smylar.

"Well," said she, "my dear Miss Jane, don't you see what I mean—'We fly by night?'"

"Indeed I do not," was Jane's answer. "I know the words are put by Shakspeare into—"

"Shakspeare!" interrupted Mrs. Smylar,

"I mean to bring them much nearer home —must I speak more plainly?"

"Indeed," said Miss Bruff, "you must, if you wish me plainly to understand you."

"May I trust you?" said Smylar; "—may I—I think I can—be sure that you will not communicate any thing I say to your father?"

"Smylar," said Jane, "this is the first time in my life that such a question was ever asked me. It is the first time in my life that I ever fancied it possible that I *could* make a confidence unknown to him, or that had for its object the concealment or withholding from him the whole truth upon any subject whatever. But as I am *now* placed I certainly will, and *do* promise you not to repeat to my father any thing you may suggest or advise."

"I am satisfied with the promise," said Smylar; "I will trust you with the design—as I know you will trust *me* with the execution of it. You hate this Mr. Grindle—no wonder—you know my opinion of him. I have before explained to you, as a sufferer myself, the horror and misery of marrying whom

one does not—cannot—love. Well, so far you know my views and sentiments. Your father is resolved upon this hateful match. Send him your appeal—it may make a hit, as we say. If it does, so much the better—all will be well. If it does not, act *your* part in the farce of which I have just spoken."

"How do you mean?" said Jane.

"'Fly by night,'" said Smylar. "Yes, even on the eve of the wedding, go. I will take care that all shall be managed secretly for you; go—quit the house, and let the disappointed bridal party find the bride fled, her bed unslept in, and her path unknown."

"Smylar!" said Jane, almost terrified at the proposition.

"Don't be frightened," said Smylar. "By this deciding and decisive step, that affair would be settled, and in that case you could, as I said, fall back upon your friends the Amershams; who, when they found how the matter really stood, would give you shelter and support."

"But how do you mean?" said Jane. "Leave my father's house?"

"To be sure," said Smylar, "leave any

thing, every thing, rather than submit to certain misery. I told you, my dear Miss Jane, to rely upon *me*—I can manage every thing for you. There's your own maid, she can go with you—I will settle it; but recollect this is only in case your father should attempt to drive you to desperation."

"Ah, Smylar!" said Jane, "I scarcely think any thing would induce me to take such a step as that. Besides, the escape would be temporary; of course my father would know whither I had gone, and where I was, and would fetch me back; and certainly from Mrs. Amersham's late letters I do not think they would be inclined to take part against him in this business."

"Well," said Smylar, "all *I* mean to say is, that you will find me ready and willing to act up to all I have promised."

"But," said Jane, "let us hope that we may not be driven to any such extremities. Let us hope that my father will be softened by the appeal I have made. If I asked any positive favour, if it was I who was anxious to marry any particular person, or indeed to be married at all, then I could imagine his

unqualified refusal; but mine is the negative request, of being left alone."

"I very much doubt," said Smylar; "for though I know no more of the colonel's real views or intentions than you do, and perhaps less; still I think, from what I hear in the house as to the orders for things for the wedding-day—I *do* think he is resolved;—and therefore, dear Miss Jane, turn it over in your mind, and risk any thing rather than being married to *that* man."

"I wish I had never been born!" said Jane.

"Don't fret, don't fret, my dear young lady," said Smylar. "If I thought I had any influence over the colonel, you might depend upon my doing all I could; but, bless your soul, I no more dare to talk to him about family matters, beyond the house-keeper's room and the servants' hall, than I dare fly."

"Well," said Jane, "I am so far resolved that this appeal of mine shall go to him, and then we shall see what will happen next."

Just conceive the poor dear unsuspecting girl saying "*we*"—thus connecting herself and Smylar in a conditional bond of union against

her father. To what extremities must she have been driven—to what apprehensions must she have been subject! However, she fulfilled her resolution, and Smylar held the light while the anxious daughter sealed the letter to her parent, upon which letter the chances were, the said Smylar would, in the morning, be the first person consulted by him.

Nothing in the world could have turned out so unhappily as the coolness—trifling as it was, and temporary as it was likely to be—between the amiable Emma Amersham and the bewildered Jane. Jane, vexed, did not like to write again; as Emma had written last, *she* did not think it necessary to write to her. But this little misunderstanding, trifling as it was, was the cause of great danger and difficulty to Miss Bruff; who, upon the present occasion, having dismissed her new adviser, and directed her father's servant to leave her letter upon his dressing-table, retired, if not to rest, at least to bed; but as she felt, with very little chance of sleep.

They who can read hearts and minds—few enough there be who *can*—but they who *can*,

by spelling and putting-together, as the grammar school-phrase goes, may perhaps anticipate the triumphant flutter of Mrs. Smylar's heart as she glided down stairs to supper in her sanctum, after having completely "spidered her fly," if such a phrase is admissible. What her ulterior object was, it is by no means difficult to divine; but it is painful to know, that she should even thus far have succeeded with her innocent victim. She sat down with an eager appetite to her delicate banquet; and although far be it from the historian to insinuate that she had any inordinate affection for strong waters, it may be permitted to him to observe, that on this special occasion, she indulged herself with a little something comfortable, in the imbibition of which she was subsequently joined by Miss Harris, who, having seen her young lady settled for the night, roamed about the passages below, to Mrs. Smylar's door, and not being inclined to sleep, tapped at it, and was admitted.

And here went on another scene of duplicity, doubly dyed, conducted in the true theatrical style. With Harris, of course, Smylar

was every thing kind and devoted to her young lady; and when Harris, who had never quite gotten it out of her head that Jane was desperately in love with Miles Blackmore, spoke of her low spirits, and how she went to bed crying and sobbing, Smylar "didn't wonder, poor dear — dear thing, if she *had* fallen in love; who could help it?" and so on, cunningly trusting Miss Harris not one inch beyond the tether in which she held her; having perfectly satisfied herself that Jane had, as she had written to her respectable and disagreeable parent, no attachment in the world.

And while all this was transacting, as we already know, steamboats and galloping horses were bringing Mr. George Grindle home—nay, he would be there on the morrow for aught they knew. Poor Harris, to whom her mistress's aversion to him was no secret, was really affected by her position, and was excited by two or three crocodile tears from the experienced eyes of Mrs. Smylar to such a degree, that by way of consolation and support, she fell into the insidious snares of the lady-housekeeper, and

took one or two gentle sips of exceedingly weak hot brandy-and-water.

But now for the colonel. Smylar, as time wore on, and he did not return, twelve o'clock having stricken, and being rather warmed into action by "the drink," as Hamlet has it, felt somehow mightily inclined to be present when he opened the written appeal from Jane; but then she did not know how long he might keep his servant, nor was she exactly certain in what state of mind he might be (seeing, as we know, that he *did* indulge now and then), when he came home. So she resolved to go to her bed; and having filled the ears of Harris with praises of her young mistress, sweeter even than the nectar with which she had filled her mouth, they parted, and the house was left to the care of a footman and the colonel's man.

It was late when the master of the house returned. He had been in deep conference with Sir George. He had explained to him, that however odd and shy Jane might appear, she was a warm, kind-hearted girl; and that having had a *tête-à-tête* talk with her that day after dinner, he was quite sure that

the match would be a happy one; that she very much admired George; but that, as far as *he* himself felt, he thought—recollecting his own career in his younger days—that George himself was scarcely earnest enough—that he took the whole matter too philosophically.

"Odds bobs!" said the colonel; "when I went courting, I didn't twiddle my curls, nor pull up my collar—not that in those days, curls or collars were the fashion; but I went at it, don't you see, my dear Sir George, in what I call the slap-bang, no-nonsense-style of performance. Now, from what she said to me after dinner to-day, it strikes me that she doesn't know what he means: I feel fidgety—I don't like the niggling style—I don't believe, upon my life, that he has ever yet told her plain bolt-out, what he wants."

"Perhaps not," said Sir George; "but you see, so much in these matters is left to be inferred."

"That'll do," said the colonel, "of course; but what does Sterne say, 'You might as well try to make a black-pudding by talking

about it, as you might try to make love;' and he, you know, Sir George, was a clergyman, and must have known all, how, and about it."

"Why," said Sir George, "my boy is naturally timid, and —"

"Ah," interrupted Bruff, "that's just it—'faint heart never won fair lady.' If it had been your other son, I could have understood it; but here—in this case—eh—?"

"Well," said Sir George, "he will be in town to-morrow I hope, and we shall see. All I can say is, that if he has gained the affections of your girl, he is a deucedly lucky fellow.".

"Gained!" said the colonel. "That'll do —Monday-week—settled—that's all agreed upon—so there's no fear about *that*."

And with this mutual assurance they parted. The colonel returned to his peaceful home, and went his way to his dressing-room, thence to *his* bed.

Jane heard him return; wakeful and restless as she was, the knock at the house-door reverberated through the stillness of the night, and struck upon her ear—ay, upon

her heart. He, the sole arbiter of her fate, was come to read the appeal which she had made against his decree; then came the fear of the morning meeting, and all the severity she so much dreaded. Hope, which, as the poet says, "springs eternal in the human breast," certainly did occasionally for a few minutes cheer her; but she too well knew the firmness (as it is called in great men, and obstinacy in small ones) of her father's resolves; and it was not until daylight that she fell into a slumber, whence she was awakened by the arrival of Harris, to make arrangements for the beginning of another day.

She rose, dressed, and as usual went down to the breakfast-room, expecting to find papa waiting for her, as was generally the case; but no, he was not there. She rang the bell, the butler appeared, and announced that the colonel was gone to breakfast with Sir George Grindle, but he had left a note for Miss Bruff, which was accordingly delivered to her.

Smylar, it seems, had been up earlier than Jane. How she obtained an audience of the

colonel so soon in the morning, it is impossible to surmise; but certain it is, that *she* read the appeal to him from his daughter, which we have already seen, and pronounced her opinion upon it, to the effect that nothing could be more absurd or ridiculous.

"If," said Mrs. Smylar, "she really did love somebody else, there might be something in it; but if her heart is disengaged, what upon earth can she do better than marry this young gentleman? When will she get a better offer—a title, as you say, colonel—a fortune, every thing suitable. What can she want? My belief from what she said last night is, that those Amershams have been setting her against this match. They are dangerous folks. I thought differently of them up to yesterday, but I am almost sure that they are the people who try to induce her to rebel; and you mark, colonel, if my words don't come true."

"That'll do," said Bruff, "don't waste your breath—my mind is made up, and that's enough. I won't see the girl—I *did*

mean to breakfast at home, of course, but I won't—so, go—I shall leave a note for *her* that will finish the whole affair. You see matters as I do—go, go."

And so Smylar retired, and the colonel proceeded to write the note or letter, or whatever it may be called, which was left for Jane, and which she opened with cold and trembling hands. Thus she read:

"It is perfectly useless for you to make any attempts to change my determination about your marriage with George Grindle. I would have told you so at once and have done with it, but you have chosen to take to writing—so have I—and now listen and ponder my words: George will be in town we expect to-morrow—you will receive him on his return as your accepted husband. The nonsense you talk about his having made you no offer, goes for nothing. He is, as *he* knows, and as *we* know, your affianced husband; all the necessary writings are prepared, the settlements are just ready, and what I now write, *no power on earth*

shall induce me to recall or revoke. On Monday week, the 21st instant, you will and SHALL be married to him before ten o'clock in the morning. So let me hear no more objections, and that'll do.

"ALEXANDER BRUFF."

CHAPTER XIII.

It must be confessed that affairs seem to be drawing towards a crisis. The abrupt cessation of personal communication between the colonel and his daughter—her unquestionable preference, as a counsellor, of Smylar to Mrs. Amersham, her once most loved friend and best adviser—and the hourly expected appearance of Mr. George Grindle—all these formed a combination of circumstances which appeared to threaten the happiness—perhaps—but let us even yet hope not—the character and respectability—of the yet innocent and amiable Jane.

The great mischief to be apprehended is most likely to accrue from the strange coldness, of which Jane could not but be sen-

sible, in her dear friend Emma's last communication, and the pride which, even in her gentle heart, struggled against any further appeal to the feelings of her once—and so recently — most intimate and affectionate adviser.

But wherever evil threatens innocence, there comes what the chronometer-maker would call "a compensation balance." The more the power of Smylar increased, and the more patiently, placidly, and even half-consentingly, Jane listened to the suggestions and insinuations of the "she sarpent" (as the great American ophiologist spells it), the less she felt the possibility of executing the proposed design, arising from her estrangement from the Amershams.

If she *did* go—if on the bridal morn the nest should be found without the bird—whither was she to fly? It was wholly out of the question that without a vast deal more explanation than Jane either felt disposed to give, or, in point of fact, *could* give, of the real facts of the case, the Amershams would harbour the truant, or countenance the runaway. Thus it seems that every bane

has its antidote, and that even the artful Smylar had over-reached herself in what is called "setting Jane against" the only people to whose protection any thing upon earth could induce her to trust herself, supposing her driven to such a desperate measure as that of abandoning her father's house, and so achieving all that Mrs. Smylar had in view, by throwing off her allegiance, and incurring his irrevocable curse and sentence of eternal separation and abandonment —modifying only his stern decree perhaps by making such an allowance for the maintenance of his child as Mrs. Smylar under the circumstances, thought he might reasonably afford.

Has not Jane Bruff been fully described to the reader—her sweetness—her gentleness—the kindness of her heart—the purity of her mind? Yes, surely. See her then now as she *is*, on the verge of a precipice—think of her, doubting as she lies in her bed, with her head upon her once peaceful pillow — thinking of conduct which one month before she never would, never could have imagined or considered. Mrs. Smylar

had friends, highly respectable, excellent people—perfect gentlefolks—who if she felt disinclined to make further appeals to the Amershams, would be too happy to give her a place of refuge from the killing effects of parental tyranny. It was not far from town that they lived—the air healthy—the place quiet—away from any high-road (not but in these days of those murderous abominations, railways, the high-roads are likely, till the madness ends, to be the most unfrequented paths)—such agreeable people—so motherly—and so exceedingly good—and so accomplished, and would be *so* charmed to be of use, &c. &c.

All this scheme, all this arrangement, suddenly impressed upon poor Jane's mind, succeeded for the moment perfectly, and the stern denial of Colonel Bruff to see her during the ensuing day, together with the certainty of George Grindle's arrival in the afternoon, had the effect of "rationalizing" (if there be such a word) an enterprise, the result of which could be nothing but what the artful Smylar intended it to be—ruin

irredeemable to her master's once dear and only daughter.

It was past three o'clock when Mr. George Grindle's cab was driven by its charming master to the colonel's door. The tiger gave a thundering knock—Jane did that which certainly is not usually done by decently bred young ladies, but for which the peculiarity and urgency of the case must excuse her—she ran to the drawing-room window to realise her worst anticipations. What was to be done? Smylar was with her—*still* with her—mark *that*—watch the constant association—the dreadfully growing influence.

"I cannot, indeed I cannot see him," said Jane.

"Then you *shall* not," said Smylar; and away she flew down the staircase, with all the display of agility and ancles which used to delight the galleries of the theatre at Bullock's-smithy, when she bounded along the oil-stained planks intended to represent the difficult paths and passes of mountains in melodramas. "Say Miss Bruff is out,"

were the words which in a stage-whisper she gave to the footman acting porter.

"Out?" said George; "where is she gone to, eh? Where's the colonel? I saw him just now; he said your young lady was at home."

"Miss Bruff is out, sir," said the man.

"Are you sure?" said George.

"Quite sure, sir," replied the fellow, who stood too much in awe of Smylar to attempt speaking the truth at any time.

"Well," said George Grindle, "that's very odd indeed—rather uncommon. The colonel *said* Miss Jane was at home, and—"

"Why, sir," said the man—and it is odd enough to see how much this class of people, who would upon the slightest provocation rob a plate-chest if they could get at it, or cut the throat of their master to prevent detection, dislike any kind of cross-questioning as to the not-at-homeship which in all good society is known to be a conventional term, and unquestionable when once adopted—except perhaps by a lover,—"I suppose, sir, my young lady knows whether she is at home or not?"

George was angry; not that *he* cared about the disappointment as regarded the *tête-à-tête*, but he disliked the too evident disinclination of Jane to the match, as a kind of wound to his personal vanity. The vanity of a professed lady-killer is something, to be sure; and away he went, his white gloves dabbling with the whiter reins of his "splendid trotter," resolved to lodge a complaint with the colonel, touching his exclusion.

Smylar, dear confederate, who knew that little more was wanting than this refusal on the part of Jane to admit the lover, to draw things to the point whereunto she wished to "screw them," was charmed with the colloquy which she took care to overhear; and when she returned to her and reported progress, the advice she gave her was to continue the course towards George which she had just adopted, and which must bring things to a crisis.

"And remember, Miss Jane," said she, "if I had not the power of being useful practically, I would not argue. I have told you before, and I tell you now, you ought not to marry the man:—resist—and I again repeat,

that I will find you shelter and security where you may avoid the harshness and violence of your hard-hearted father."

Here we see a powerful instance of the strength of what may be called habitual influence: three months before this day the idea, not merely of disobeying her only parent, but the thought of hearing him called hard-hearted, would have been worse to her than death. Yet now she sat and listened with pleasure to her odious companion's prate, and saw in her mind's eye the beauties of the retirement which she said her proposed asylum from tyranny and oppression possessed.

Ten, twenty times a-day did Jane think of writing once more to Mrs. Amersham; but no—the earnestness, the activity, the lamp-oil, orange-peel, and saw-dust quickness of Smylar were so much better suited to her present perilous condition, than the mild, just, moral, and proper advice of her now discarded friend, that she feared to mar the trickeries of her new prompter by asking for better counsel; and as to confiding to Emma, the twisting wriggling manœuvres of the spindle-shanked ex-heroine of Bullock's-smithy, she

was quite sufficiently aware of her own degradation to feel convinced that at all hazards Mrs. Amersham would endeavour to rescue her from such a fœtid influence, even to the extent of denouncing the dirty-minded hypocrite to Bruff himself.

And so sank poor Jane, unconsciously, under the abominable power of the being whom upon earth she most hated and despised.

Strange it is, but true—and how often are the strangest things the truest—that a little, inexplicable, and undefinable coldness springing up—who, except themselves, can tell exactly how?—between two old and dear friends, should have brought about this much unwished for consummation. The tenderer the friendship, the more susceptible are the friends of any little alteration of manner or spirit. The few days' cessation of correspondence between these two had given much pain to Emma; but *then* she had *her* point to carry about Mr. Miles Blackmore. Jane felt a void in her heart because she did not hear from Emma; but then *she* did not enter into the feelings, and would not take part in a cause in which she thought Jane was capri-

cious, if not absolutely wrong. Such struggles of pride and feeling may do a world of mischief.

"Governor," said George, meeting his father at Crocky's, "I say, something's wrong at old 'That'll-do's,'—went in proper form at half-past three—nothing done—not let in—how's this?"

"Why, I suppose," said Sir George, "you wasn't expected; or, perhaps, Miss Jenny was out."

"That's a bad shot, governor," said George; "saw her pale face shining through one of the drawing-room windows, like a—"

"Never mind the simile," said the baronet; "she is the star of *your* destiny, so mind what you are about, *that's* all I say. Frank's down with that old brute Leeson—I call him brute, although he *is* my brother-in-law, or at least was, so long as his sister was alive as my wife—*he* is out of your way, and an uncommon good job too."

"Ah!" said George, settling his collars and touching up his hair, "that's quite another affair. Old Leeson is ill—"

"No worse than he deserves to be," said

Sir George; "however, Frank thinks him something, as he ought to do, if the old dunce really does what he says he will in the way of leaving him every thing—however, that is *his* affair—Miss Bruff is *yours*."

"Then," said George, "I'll trouble you so far as to get me the *entrée*. Just mention to the colonel that I was shut out to-day, and that it can be of no kind of use persevering in that manner, especially after it is understood to be an 'arrangement.'"

"He is to call here in half an hour," said the baronet; "and I say, George—as to the—eh—the—no secrets between *us*—the Nelly—how did you leave her?"

"Perfectly happy," said George; "delighted with her babby and a walking-stick given to it by a new friend, to whose particular notice I have recommended her."

"What, then, you didn't hint," said Sir George, "that she had seen the last of you?"

"Hint?" said George; "*au contraire*—I am pledged, if I can, to return to celebrate the birthday of my pup on the fifth of October—ha! ha! ha!"

"Good," said the baronet; "why you

would have made a capital actor, George; and was she quieted by *that?*"

"Believed it," said Mr. Grindle; "took the bait like a gudgeon; and when the pup cried as it was going to bed at night, told me I should see it in the morning—eh, governor? —there's a touch of maternity for you!"

"The young sister you say is—"

"O '*Giove Omnipotente!*' such a creature," said George; "just rising seventeen—such eyes—such teeth—such a figure! However, I have done all I could for the lot; I have recommended them to the special care of an uncommonly nice kind of a fellow, and I trust—if I am not ignorant in what I call eye-reading —that Mrs. Ellen Greenford will find a most agreeable friend in Mr. Miles Blackmore."

"Surely," said Sir George, "I have heard his name mentioned at the Bruffs'?"

"Yes," said the charming son of the worthy sire, "I think from a few words that dropped from my Jane—mark *that*, governor, *my* Jane—that he must have been a sort of half lover of hers. When he first gave me his card at Abbeville, I did not quite recollect how he was associated in my mind with

Jane — however, I have recollected more about him since, and I flatter myself if he *should* take Mistress Nelly off my hands — which, if I know the world, is not quite impossible — while I secure Miss Jenny — I think we shall manage capitally — eh, governor?"

"Why," said Sir George, not looking so much delighted at the exceedingly good management of his son as he usually was, "do *you* know, my dear fellow, I am not by any means certain that you have exercised your ordinary judgment in this affair. Rely upon it, as we have heard the name of this Mr. Blackmore at the Bruffs', Mr. Blackmore has heard *yours* at the Amershams'—the people of whom your intended is so constantly talking. It seems to *me* that you have somehow over-finessed yourself, by selecting him of all the birds in the air and the fishes in the sea to relieve you of your hard bargain."

"I tell you, governor," said George; "when I first saw the hit Nelly had made, I never meant him, whose name I did not then know, to know mine. Our subsequent meet-

ing and his way of carrying on the war, rendered it impossible for me to assume an alias —especially with Nelly and the pup there. Of course, when he was so civil and all that, I did not know in the least *who* he was—*what* he was I could guess by his look and manner—all in what I call proper form, governor. I agree with you, that when I saw his card, it brought to my mind Jane's mention of him, and of his intimacy with her friends; but what could I do? And besides, if seven days are to seal my fate with the gallant colonel's daughter, as you and he say they will, what can it signify what Mr. Blackmore, or whatever his name is, can do? Nelly won't know that she is regularly cast adrift till she sees our appearance at church proclaimed in the papers; and, moreover, if she knew the truth to-day, I have such a high opinion of her sentiment and constancy, and all that sort of thing, that I am sure she would not make up her mind to a new start under a fortnight at least."

"Ah!" said the baronet, "I know you take a favourable view of her merits—however, we shall see—no harm can be done—

all we must stick to is expedition—for the bubble will burst if we procrastinate—so make your game, George, and lose no time."

"Make my game, governor?" said Mr. George Grindle; "I'll make my game and play it too—only let me get at the table. If my boy is to go ninny-hammering at old Bruff's door every day, and 'not at home' is the answer to the knock, why I see no kind of fun in the business."

"That," said Sir George, "shall be settled forthwith. I know that Bruff is ready to enforce his commands if necessary."

"Enforce?" said George, looking askance at the glass over the chimneypiece—"enforce? how deucedly odd,—eh, governor? Leaving Nelly drowned in tears on one side of the Channel because I quit her, and finding Jenny suffused with a quantity of the same strange liquid because I return to *her*."

"I am talking on business, George," said the baronet; "this affair must be settled—tears are all mighty well, but with women mean little—they cry for grief and they cry for joy; but when I have settled the colonel as to smoothing the way (and the only diffi-

culty I see at the moment seems to arise from some temporary squabble between him and the girl), you must follow up the matter in what I call a slap-bang style. The day has been fixed by *him*—to that you must stick."

"I'm prepared for the worst," said George; "some old fellow says 'hanging and marriage go by destiny'—I should like to be put out of suspense, and turned off as soon as convenient. But are the settlements and all that satisfactory?"

"Not a word about it," said Sir George—"*that* it is which makes expedition most important. I had no idea that the fellow's stupidity was so extensive. I cannot enter into particulars here — but we have done him, George. His solicitor, a most gentlemanly man, seemed to hesitate about sanctioning — for advice the obstinate fellow will not take—the absurdities which he has chosen to perpetrate; all I can say is, that under existing arrangements, the girl and all her fortune, past, present, and to come, will be under your own whole and sole control."

"That'll do, as the old chap himself says,"

replied George; "then the innocent young thing—"

"Say nothing," answered Sir George; "the affair is settled—the longer the conclusion is delayed, the more the opportunities for consideration; so — Monday week — mind."

"Oh, dear!" said George; "what a bore it is, if a man wants fifty or sixty thousand pounds, that he must take a young woman whom he does *not* want into the bargain. However, get me the *entrée*—don't let me be refused, and then—"

"Never mind," said Sir George; "as I told you, I expected Paternity Bruff to call for me, and I see him pounding the pavement over the way; so I will join him and bring him forthwith to a proper understanding of the terms upon which you expect to be received."

"Just the thing, governor," said George; "because for a recognised and accepted lover to be excluded from the bower of his betrothed by porters, pages, and persons of that sort, is *raather* too much."

So then parted George the first and George

the second; and the reader need hardly be told how earnestly and eloquently the elder of the two pleaded the cause of the younger one. Indeed, it required no great expenditure of language to satisfy Bruff of the justice of Sir George's complaints on behalf of his son; and he announced on his own part, and in the name of his daughter, her readiness to receive Mr. George Grindle at two o'clock the next day; and, if he wished it, her equal readiness to be driven by him in his cabriolet through all those streets and generally-received places of fashionable resort, which are fashionably considered London—her exhibition in which might at once practically proclaim their approaching alliance.

George, who did not very highly estimate the personal attractions of Jane, would probably have demurred to this suggestion, had it not been that the season was quite suitable, in his eyes, to such a peregrination, inasmuch as everybody was out of town; while yet of the nobodies enough remained to mark and note down for the benefit of

their friends in the country, a step so unequivocally decisive of the expected result.

"Let him in?" said Bruff to Sir George, "eh? who will dare to keep him out? What! do you mean to say that he called to-day and was not admitted?"

"That *is* the case," said Sir George, "as he represents it to me."

"That'll do—that'll do!" exclaimed the colonel; "but, my dear friend, it will never occur again—*I* will take care of that. You have seen my exemplary housekeeper, Mrs. Smylar—a treasure—I can entirely rely upon *her*. She certainly avails herself of the privileges of long and faithful service, to give me hints now and then about my family matters. I tell you, quite between ourselves, that there *are* interests at work somehow—how, I don't know—for, as you know, I know very little about any thing; but all those are mere moonshine—don't you comprehend?—nothing: all shall be arranged for to-morrow—let George come in his cab—she shall take a drive with him—and then—ha! ha! ha! I think that'll do—eh?"

"So do I, my dear colonel," said Sir George. "By Jove, after all, you military men are the best for carrying orders into effect—you are so sharp—so quick—you see every thing with an eagle's eye."

"That'll do—ha! ha!" said Bruff. "I say, Sir George, it isn't an easy thing to deceive me—no, no; as I have said before, command is command—go and do this—that's what I say, and they do it. Why, sir, d'ye think that I was six-and-twenty years strapped up in a sash, with a white belt over my shoulders, and my chin nearly cut off with a tight leathern stock, calling out, 'Halt—left wheel—halt—front—dress,' without understanding something of discipline? I am now advanced in life and rank, but what of that?—never, so long as I live, shall I forget, sir, in private life, or in the affairs of my own family, my old 'halt—left wheel—halt—front—dress,' it is a delight to me, and I am proud of the feeling; and you, Sir George, shall find that I carry out the principle to-morrow. White sergeants are no more to me than brown ones."

"Well, my dear colonel," said Sir

George, "under these circumstances I think we may look upon the campaign as nearly closed."

"I say," said Bruff, "has he got quite clear of the other little circumstance—shaken off *that* connexion?"

"Entirely," answered the worthy baronet.

"No distress on the part of the girl?" said the colonel.

"On the contrary, I believe," said Sir George; "they had known quite enough of each other to have become worse than indifferent—that you know is universally the case with these sorts of *liaisons*."

"True, true," said Bruff; "not that I know much of such matters. What I say, Sir George, is, 'wrong never comes right,' do what you will, that's my maxim. Any blockhead can club a regiment—it takes a sharp chap to make all straight again. I remember when I was on Lord Sabertash's staff, being with him when he reviewed a militia regiment in Leicestershire, and after bearing with their blunders for a couple of hours, he ordered the colonel to march them into an old gravel-pit. When they were in it, he

rode up to the edge of it and said, 'There, you are, my fine fellows, and there you had better stay; for by Jove you are not fit to be seen on the face of the earth.' Thinks I to myself, that'll do, and away we cantered before they could recover from their surprise."

The dialogue between the "fathers" continued just long enough to conclude by the expression of their mutual determination as to the course of proceedings to be adopted on the morrow, in the way of the projected public proclamation of the approaching union; and with the morning was to come the announcement to Jane of this great resolve. It would, indeed it *must* be the test; if she consented to that measure, if she yielded that point, every thing ulterior would be virtually and necessarily conceded.

The colonel, who, acting upon Mrs. Smylar's advice, had not yet "restored himself" to any personal communication with Jane, felt puzzled how to descend from the dignified position he had assumed, and permit himself to be familiar with his undutiful daughter. He could not make up his mind

to convey his commands to her through Smylar, although his inclination tended that way. At length, and after much deliberation with himself, and a renewed conference with his familiar, he determined upon getting George Grindle to drive him to Harley-street, and thus accompanied, make his call on Jane, and so supported, propose the excursion to her — to which proposition the colonel would then hear no denial — perfectly sure in his own mind that the poor girl would not dare to oppose his commands before George, or to risk a scene in "company."

Thus the bluff Bruff meant to carry his point by a "*coup-de-main;*" and therefore, still maintaining his dignified silence towards Jane, he left home, having breakfasted by himself, aided only by his prime-minister, who very soon determined that, however great the success might be which she anticipated from the suddenness of his attack on his daughter, the surprise should not be quite so great as he expected.

It so happened that this very day's post brought Jane a letter from Mrs. Amersham,

dated from Broadstairs, to which exceedingly pretty quiet watering-place she and her "dear good husband" had betaken themselves for a short sojourn. Jane's heart beat when she again saw the well-known writing of her old and intimate friend. The sight of it brought to her recollection the various kindnesses she had received from her, and filled her mind with self-reproaches that she had ever doubted the sincerity of her affection, or questioned the truth and earnestness of her friendship. She broke open the letter, and read as follows:—

"Broadstairs,
"Thursday.

"My dear Jane,

"It seems an age since I have heard from you, and having so suddenly betaken ourselves to the sea-side, I felt apprehensive that you might write, and a consequent delay take place in the progress of your letter; which, as we hear from undoubted authority of the near approach of that ceremony at which, whenever it was to happen, I always

thought I should be present, I should like, if possible, to prevent.

"You will perhaps be surprised that we should be here; but the truth is, a cousin of Mr. Amersham's, of whom I think you have heard us speak, Mrs. Hartwell, has arrived from India (where she has left her husband in a high office in the civil service), and being an invalid, and having been landed at Margate with her three dear little children (whom I almost grudge her, they *are* so pretty and engaging), my husband, with a cousin-like affection and regard, proposed that we should run down and settle her here, where she would rather be than in London; and so accordingly down we came, and here we are.

"I never was here before. I am delighted with the place, and more than once, or twice, or three times, have wished you were with us. It is literally a little quiet nook of comfort, as calm and as retired as a country village, with a nice picturesque old pier, charming sands, a cliff quite high enough for me, houses convenient if not large,

a promenade exceedingly agreeable, and a view of France, which, as far as I am concerned, is quite as near as I ever wish it to be to me: and all this so placed as to include the noise of Margate, with its arriving steamboats, and the affected gentility of Ramsgate, within one's after-luncheon drive.

"But perhaps, Miss Jane, you will say, 'What do you know of the near approach of my marriage, since, for some reason yet unexplained, I have not thought it worth my while to mention the day myself?' I think my answer will startle you.

"Next door to us—for we are located in a row—I should say, *the* row (*par excellence*) of houses, lives—but I am afraid not likely to live long—a gentleman of the name of Leeson, of whom I presume you must have heard, although, from what I can learn, there exists no great cordiality between him and his brother-in-law, Sir George Grindle, the father of your intended. This amiable old gentleman—amiable as I hear, for I have never seen him—although, my dear Jane, I have *heard* his moans through the thin walls of these fragile tenements—is constantly nursed,

watched, and guarded by a certain Mr. Francis Grindle, who will, as he says, so shortly stand in relation of brother-in-law to *our* Jane.

"My dear good-natured husband is, as you know, the most accessible and sociable of human beings, and the very first morning after our arrival here, he became acquainted with our young next-door neighbour. The moment he heard our name, he seemed too happy to snatch an hour from his dutiful and affectionate attentions to (I fear) his dying uncle, to join our little quiet circle, where he was not only within reach, but literally within call, if his services should be required by the invalid.

"And now, dearest Jane, having said this, I am going to begin one of my lectures. I am sure, my dear friend, that I have vexed you by sending you *our* united request, that you would consider well before you declared open war against your father on the subject of your proposed marriage; which rebellion *we*—and I feel myself greatly strengthened by the *plurality*—did and do consider, knowing all the circumstances connected with that horrid housekeeper, most dangerous to your

future prospects of happiness, inasmuch as your resistance would increase her influence, and produce, as *we* believe, the very result which is most to be dreaded. Now really, Jane, if *we* may take Mr. Frank Grindle as a specimen of the family, we ought to redouble our entreaties and admonitions. I never met with so charming a person in my life—no, dear, not even the rejected and expelled Miles Blackmore.—Full of talent, only dimmed in its brightness by his diffidence—full of kindness and benevolence, exalted and beautified by his apparent unconsciousness of the value of the duties he assiduously performs, and the sacrifices he voluntarily and religiously makes—he seems to me to be as near perfection as humanity may be permitted to approach it.

"Of *you* he speaks in a tone which shows the depth of his feelings, the soundness of his judgment, and the generosity of his character. It is clear that you have left a deep impression on his mind; and if it were not that high principle and a sense of duty checked the impulse, I should say—upon

his heart. He is, indeed, a delightful person.

"Judging then from this *échantillon* of the Grindles, I am afraid, Jane, that your hostility to his brother arises more from the compulsory part of the compact, than any personal *désagrémens* in the gentleman. Is it not strange—but so is the way of the world—that we should have come here to meet and cherish a cousin from India, and find ourselves placed next-door to the intended brother-in-law of our dear Jane. If this were put into a novel, people would call it improbable, and exclaim, 'Oh! how likely!' Here, however, is the fact, and I am delighted at the coincidence, as is Amersham, who takes his turn of duty with Mr. Grindle at the bed-side of poor dear Mr. Leeson every day.

"And now, dearest Jane, comes my most serious question—at least as a secondary question—because it is personal to myself and Amersham. Do you really mean to say, that you intend to be married without inviting us to the wedding? I have told Mr.

Grindle that as of course he will be present if he can be spared from his self-imposed duties here, we can make our party hence together. I confess I am not exceedingly fond of sea voyages, and in spite of the marvellous advantages which it has produced, exceedingly averse from all the operations of steam; our carriage, however, will hold us, and as I am sure you mean to invite us, all I mean to ask is, when are we likely to be expected?

"Mr. Grindle says next Monday week is fixed; if so, really you ought to give us a little notice. Assure yourself, my dearest Jane, even if we are—and I can hardly fancy we shall be—excluded, our hearts will be with you, and all the warmest and sincerest prayers and wishes for your happiness will attend you. But *do* write—do say that *we* —you see how pertinaciously I stick to the partnership—have not offended you.

"Do us, moreover, the favour to remember us most kindly to the colonel, who seems —why, we know not—to have left us off latterly, much in the same way as yourself. Write by return of post. Mr. Amersham

desires his kindest love; and Mr. Frank Grindle, who has just come in, begs me to send his fraternal regards. So adieu, dear, dear Jane.

"Yours truly and affectionately,

"EMMA AMERSHAM."

"P.S. I suppose it is *now* high treason to speak of *my* poor Mr. Blackmore; but we heard from him about three or four days since in France; in which country, from what he says, Mr. Amersham thinks he means to stay for some time."

If Jane had felt disturbed and agitated by seeing the address upon the envelope of the letter, what must have been her sensations when she had actually read its contents? the thousand points which it almost unconsciously involved—the conflicting feelings it aroused—the contending passions it excited—the thought that Francis Grindle was there, domesticated with her dearest friend—the thought that *he* was to be taken as an example—to be set up as a living reproach to her, for her dislike of, and contempt for

his half-brother—the knowledge that he was devotedly fulfilling his duty to his fond uncle, the object of Sir George's hatred and derision, and that he—*he* of all others in the world, was to be a witness of her ill-fated union with George, in company with the dearest friends of her heart.

Certain however it was, that this letter had a most powerful and salutary effect in recalling Jane to a sense of the affectionate conduct of the Amershams. What *had* they done cruel or oppressive in cautioning her upon the subject of rebellion against her father? Perhaps it was a most fortunate circumstance that she received it just at that particular moment when the influence of her bitterest enemy was rapidly gaining the ascendancy. She read it again, and tears again filled her eyes. Not only did she again thank Providence for what really seemed the blessing of a communication from Emma, which in the then, or rather previous state of her mind, would never have been "provoked" by any further appeal of hers; but dearly and deeply did she appreciate the combination of events which had associated her

earliest friend with Frank, and evidently interested her in his favour.

Now then came the next question—should she, considering how much she had fallen—and *fallen* is the word,—into the power of Smylar—should she communicate the contents of this letter to her? Jane was almost certain, from the hints and inuendoes — to call them nothing else—of Smylar, that *she* was perfectly aware of Frank Grindle's location. Of course Colonel Bruff knew where he was—indeed, why should there be any mystery about it? And if *he* knew it, there would be little doubt but that the "*lady*" knew it also.

Should she then tell Smylar the truth? When did Jane, before the now current week, ever ask herself such a question? Or would her admission that the 'Amershams were the dear friends and near neighbours of George's brother, and her father's aversion, excite some new feelings in her mind, and lead her to suppose that her unequivocally expressed dislike of the match with the elder son originated in a preference for the younger one?

She hesitated—doubted—considered. And here, reader, mark how sudden and how sad is the first inroad upon that purity of heart and thought which so unquestionably characterized poor Jane when we first met her—and how inconceivably rapid the falling off from the singlemindedness of innocence, for which she was so remarkable. Driven by circumstances into the clutches of an artful fiend in human shape, the noble-hearted, ingenuous, and affectionate Jane Bruff became all at once a double deceiver. Weaned by Smylar from the just confidence which she had for years reposed in Emma, she listens to *her* counsels; and now feeling the injustice of which she has been guilty towards those who from her youth have affectionately and disinterestedly loved her, she begins to consider it necessary to try her hand at deceiving her deceiver, and thus unconsciously play a double part; which if the be-painted and be-ringletted Mrs. Smylar had been at the bottom of the Red Sea, nothing upon the face of the earth could have brought her—not only to do—but to think of, without dread and horror.

Of course Jane resolved to answer Emma's letter by return of post; and Jane would not have hesitated to tell Smylar that such was her determination; but with all her new attempts at dissimulation she felt that she could not mention the letter without mentioning Frank; and nobody can duly appreciate the guilty feeling with which the innocent Jane hastily snatched the letter from her table, as she heard footsteps approaching, and hid it in the mass of correspondence with which her writing-desk was amply stored.

Smylar, who forthwith stood before her, saw the trepidation and alarm by which she was agitated. Accustomed throughout a long professional life to assume the appearance of passions which she never felt, and exhibit to the public expressions of feeling by which she was never affected, she was quite certain that something more than common had agitated her young victim, and therefore resolved upon restoring her, if possible, to a state of something like tranquillity before she announced to her the probability of a visit from George Grindle at two, merely for the purpose of gathering from her answers and

observations what the real state of her mind was; carefully reserving the details of the colonel's grand attack, as had been agreed upon between them.

"What time shall you order the carriage, Miss Jane?" said Smylar.

"Oh," said Jane, "I don't care. I suppose about three—that *is* if I go out—but while my father absents himself and denies me the comfort of associating with him, I really would rather stay at home."

"Why," said Smylar, "as to *that*, you have nothing to do but to pretend to agree to all he asks, and then—*I* will manage the rest."

"Can I dissemble so, Smylar?" said Jane; "or do you think it possible that I could take such a step as that to which you have hinted?"

"You had a letter from Broadstairs today?" said Smylar.

"Yes," answered Jane, who, at the moment she heard the words drop from Mrs. Smylar's lips, felt infinitely more deeply than ever the state of abject dependence in which she was living.

"I saw the postmark," said Smylar, "by mere accident, as I was giving it to Harris. It looked like Mrs. Amersham's hand-writing. I hope it was."

"It was," said Jane.

"I am glad of that," said Smylar. "Without them we should be able to do nothing."

Jane looked at her companion with astonishment. The coolness of associating herself not only with her young mistress, but with her young mistress's friends, puzzled and surprised her; indeed, the effect the observation produced upon her was sufficiently strong to induce her to pause, in order to ascertain "what should follow."

"And," continued Smylar, "something *must* be done."

"But what?" said Jane.

"That's to be thought of," said Smylar. "As your friend Shakspeare says in 'Macbeth' of old beefsteak *Duncan*, as we always called him when I was in the profession—

> 'If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
> It were done quickly.'

You have no time to lose. *I* can tell you more than you have any notion of."

"Indeed;" said Jane.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Smylar; "and can tell it you more readily from seeing by the postmark of your friend Mrs. Amersham's letter that she and the charming, amiable Mr. Frank Grindle are at the same watering-place. Oh!" continued Smylar, who saw Jane preparing an earnest disclaimer as to any knowledge of the fact,—"I don't mean *that;* dear me, the strangest things will happen; all I mean to say is, it is so. Whether Mr. Francis Grindle knows Mr. and Mrs. Amersham, is nothing to me; nor do I know anything in the world about it: all I have to remark is, that he *is* there attending his uncle Leeson, a most excellent man, as *I* hear, but hated by Sir George—that he is devoted to the old gentleman, and so on. Now, considering *that* to be the case, don't you think, my dear Miss Jane—the whole affair being really and truly accidental—that when the moment comes—when the fire is laid to the train—match perhaps would tell better—the circumstance that Mr. Francis Grindle

is associated, or at least a resident in the same watering-place with the Amershams, will make the proposition infinitely more agreeable to you?"

"Indeed, Smylar," said Jane, "I even yet do not quite understand what you really mean by what you call your proposition."

"Poor innocent!" said Smylar, looking at herself, and twisting the curls which with justice, in a mercantile point of view, she called her own. "Why, I have said to you over and over again, as plainly as I could speak, if your father forces this match upon you, *run away*. I have already proposed the scheme, but perhaps never in quite such plain words before—but there it is—do any thing rather than sacrifice yourself for ever—therefore keep in with the Amershams, for to them you must run."

"Dear Smylar," said Jane (*dear* Smylar!), "when you talked in this strain to me before, I told you that nothing could induce me to take such a step. I admit that my father's protracted absence and continued refusal to see me make me very wretched, but I still believe that he will not practically

enforce his commands when he reflects upon the misery he must inevitably entail upon me."

Now had the moment arrived for Smylar to determine upon a new and very important act of treachery and baseness—now was it for her to resolve whether she should not betray the colonel's confidence as to the surprise to be produced upon Jane's mind by his unexpected arrival with George Grindle in the cab at two, or whether she should keep that secret, and permit Jane to be overcome by the incident; or whether she should forewarn her of it and so arm her against the attack, and subsequently confide to the colonel the domestication of the Amershams in the same small watering-place with the dreaded and hated Frank; seasoning up the history, of course, with her own hints and convictions that these Amershams, to whom her great object was now to consign Jane, were all leagued in a regular conspiracy to thwart his views and wishes as regarded her marriage with George.

A few minutes' consideration, however, satisfied Mrs. Smylar that the surest possible

way of carrying *her* point, was to apprise Jane of her father's intentions, and so to arouse, if possible, her indignation at the despotism of which she could not but feel herself the victim.

"Don't you," said Smylar, after a pause in the dialogue, "don't you, my dear Miss Jane, be too certain that your father will *not* take some exceedingly strong measures—at all events, you should, as the poet says, 'be prepared.' I *could* tell you something which perhaps would startle you, and that involving the events of this very existing day, is—"

"If it is for my good to hear it," said Jane, "I am sure you will let me know what it is."

"Why *then*," said Smylar, "this day is the day destined to settle your fate through life."

"To-day?" said Jane, turning pale and trembling like a leaf; "how can to-day—"

"To-day," said Smylar; "but if you betray me, Jane, never again expect the aid which I offer you in all sincerity; and which I feel imperatively bound to afford you, from the recollection of the sufferings I have myself undergone for want of advice when I was

your age. To day is the day of trial; Mr. George Grindle is to be here about three with your father, and is to propose driving you in his cabriolet all round London — that is, down Regent-street, along Pall-Mall and up St. James's-street, to exhibit you to the world, as it is called, as his bride elect. Now, if you permit *that*, all must follow."

The words which Smylar used upon this occasion were precisely those of the colonel when describing the effect of the drive. As to Mrs. Smylar's notions of the importance of being driven in a cabriolet, or any other carriage, by any man in the world, she had none; she herself had journeyed in waggons, in omnibuses, in flys, in taxed-carts, butchers' carts, fish-carts, and indeed in any sort of vehicle of which she could avail herself, driven by any sort of man; but as in this case the colonel had fully impressed her with the definitive character of the proceeding, *she*, sworn to secresy by her confiding fool of a master, did all she could to awaken the feelings of Jane to a perfect sense of the importance of the step.

Jane looked bewildered; the idea seemed

to her to be of a nature so extraordinary, that she expressed an incredulity as to the attempt to force her into such an expedition.

"*So* it is to be," said Smylar, "and that was the reason, when I first came in, I inquired as to the time you would like to have the carriage ordered."

"But they cannot, will not force me," said Jane.

"You had better avoid the struggle," said Smylar; "you know the carriage is at your service, and at your orders, and—"

"Yes," said Jane; "but on the terms I am at present with my father, I should not like to assume the power of ordering it, and—"

"Assume!" said Smylar; "what have you to do with his frumpishness? The carriage is yours and for you—he never will know that you were aware of this intended visit. Go, Miss Jane, and before you go, write to Mrs. Amersham and tell her a little of your mind—just enough to prepare her for the possibility of your being obliged to put yourself under her protection."

"But," said Jane, "she—she is aware that

this hateful ceremony is soon to be performed, and that I am about to become the wife of Mr. George Grindle."

"Ay," said Smylar, "but are *you* yourself aware of that fact? If you stay at home today, and let him drive you about town in his cab, the thing is settled. But Jane, dear Miss Jane, do no such thing. I tell you the hour is at hand which decides all. I am sure I would not take the liberty of asking what Mrs. Amersham says to you, although as you have called me into council, I ought, perhaps, to know enough of the progress of affairs to enable me to give advice—but—"

"Oh!" said Jane, overcome by the apparent candour and sympathy of the old doll of the puppet-show, "here—you may read what she says."

Saying which, she opened the writing-desk, which she had a few minutes before so carefully closed, and handed Mrs. Smylar the letter.

Then did Smylar satisfy herself upon a point till then entirely new to her. The expectations raised in her mind by the sight of the Broadstairs post-mark were all realised.

Not only were the Amershams at the same place as Francis Grindle, but they *were* associated. All this intelligence was of the greatest importance to her; and such was her coolness and prudence, that although conscious of its value generally, she made no observation upon it, nor did she at the moment consider or calculate how it was to be turned to the best advantage; her dispositions would be made according to the course of events which might turn up, and to the tone which the mind of the colonel might take.

When she had read the letter, she refolded and returned it to Jane, saying only,

"Rely upon it, Miss Jane, those people are really your friends, and you ought to remain faithful to *them*. As to the ceremony which they seem so desirous to attend, that I think is not quite so likely to take place as they seem to think."

"Oh, Smylar!" said Jane, "if I could but think so too, what a load of misery would be taken off my heart."

"I have pointed out the way," said Smylar; "but now mark me—and I know the

world—all depends upon your resolution to-day—do not—nay, I scarcely need say the words—do not betray me to your father—but recollect, if you accede to the proposition about the drive, all the rest must follow."

"And yet," said Jane, "I cannot muster up sufficient resolution to order the carriage and leave home."

"Then," said Smylar, "muster up sufficient resolution to refuse to leave home in Mr. Grindle's cabriolet. I tell you, the crisis is at hand—Sir George is a perfect man of the world—after to-day's drive, you cannot escape—they have fashioned this deciding step into what, to an unsuspecting mind, they think will be looked upon as nothing extraordinary. I warn you of the consequences, and the question is, whether you had not better exhibit something like independence, in avoiding the trial, than remain to struggle against the commands of your father, and the persuasions of your lover."

"Lover?" said Jane.

"Well," said Smylar, "lover or not, unless you make a struggle, he will be your husband next Monday-week."

"Then," said Jane, "I am resolved—I will stay and meet the worst—force they cannot use, and if the struggle, as you call it, *is* to be made, it shall be made to-day. When am I to expect this *unexpected* visit?"

"Be careful, Miss Jane, be careful," said Smylar; "save *me* as well as yourself, and never for your life let the colonel know that I told you any thing of this business. Somewhere between two and three they will be here."

"Then I will see them," said Jane.

This determination was exactly the one to which Mrs. Smylar had wished to draw her victim. The simple ordering of the carriage would scarcely have amounted to a serious fault with old Bruff, satisfied as he would and must have been that Jane was in utter ignorance of the descent which was about to be made; but her staying at home, and the resistance and refusal of the attentions of George Grindle would, as she hoped, in all probability, produce a much more violent explosion.

"Do as you please, Miss Jane;" said Smylar; "all I say is, 'remember.'"

"I shall not forget," said Jane; and Mrs. Smylar departed for the present.

Jane's first proceeding was to write a warm and affectionate answer to Mrs. Amersham, in which she adopted, to a certain extent, the doubtful style as regarded the solemnization of the nuptials, but conditionally implored their attendance at the ceremony—excused herself for not having written earlier—gave a gentle praise to Frank Grindle, and desired Mrs. Amersham to present either her compliments, or regards, or remembrances, whichever—considering their relative positions, and the relative positions in which they were so soon to stand—she might consider most fitting, suitable, and proper. Added to these, were other kind messages to Amersham himself; but of Miles Blackmore's name, destination, or proceedings, Jane made no mention whatever, although she certainly *did* feel more about him than she ever would admit—not in the way which Mrs. Amersham always suspected—but as a superior person whom she admired, esteemed, and neglected, and one whom she almost

wished she *could* have loved, as her dearest friend believed she *did*.

Having finished her letter, and affected to eat a luncheon, and dissipated it in a glass of sherry, under the advice of Smylar, who told her that even two would do her no harm, considering what she had to undergo, and waited—one can scarcely say patiently, but rather impatiently (for any thing is better than suspense,) the arrival of the pretender to her hand, every pair of wheels that rattled along the street seemed to announce his approach—any common ringing at the door made her start. However, half-past two had been chimed—three o'clock had been stricken—and so went the time until four, but neither did Mr. George Grindle nor Colonel Bruff make their appearance; no cabriolet was whirled up to the door, and at half-past five Jane gave up the hope or rather dread of seeing him, and proceeded to her dressing-room; Harris, her maid, informing her that Mrs. Smylar, for whom she inquired, had been gone out for nearly an hour.

It is odd enough, but it is true, that Jane

felt disappointed at not having had the interview over; she had wound herself up for the conflict; there had been a strain, as it were, upon her energies, and when she sat down on her sofa she burst into a flood of tears.

LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ASIATIC

CHAPTER XIV.

"He was the kindest—the only real friend I ever had," said Francis Grindle to Amersham, as he shut the door of the room in which he had closed the eyes of his affectionate and devoted uncle.

Francis was deeply affected—so deeply, that Amersham had great difficulty in getting him away from the chamber of death to the adjoining house, which, charmed as they were with the kindness of his manners and the sweetness of his disposition, they entreated him to consider as his present home.

The worthy and respectable Mr. Leeson was dead; he gently breathed his last on the evening of the day upon which Emma had written to Jane, but after the letter had been posted. Frank's announcement of the event,

transmitted express to Canterbury, reached town in time to acquaint his father and brother of the event; which announcement prevented, for decency's sake, rather than as any matter of feeling, the projected visit of Mr. George to Miss Jane Bruff, and their subsequent deciding drive.

It is in the day of sorrow and the hour of grief that the congeniality of minds chiefly developes itself. We have only seen in Mrs. Amersham and her correspondence, an amiability of character and playfulness of disposition, calculated to insure her popularity with the world generally, and secure for her the affections of her more intimate acquaintance; but Emma was capable of greater acts of kindness than those which shone superficially in society. At the bed-side of the sick she was to be found a constant and sedulous attendant; no offices, however painful or irksome, would that amiable woman decline, when the performance of them tended really to benefit those over whom, like a ministering angel, she watched.

From the moment that this excellent creature was made aware of the actual state

of poor Mr. Leeson's health, her whole time was devoted to anticipating his wishes in all those fancies in which the sick and dying indulge—some trifling change of food—something to tempt the appetite which the physicians wished to be gratified, but which hour by hour grew weaker. Had she been Leeson's daughter, or Frank Grindle's sister, she could not have taken a deeper or more earnest interest in the sufferer's fate.

This is true nobleness of heart—this is pure genuine philanthropy. All the mawkish doubts as to what a lady ought to do, or ought not to do, were of no avail in the mind of the generous Emma; she tended and nursed their venerable neighbour with solicitude. There *was* a tie to bind her to him, and that was his connexion with her darling Jane's intended husband;—but, truth to say, the more she saw of Frank, the more she understood his character, and the more she heard of the circumstances in which he was placed, the more she exerted herself in her attentions to Leeson, and the better she comprehended, *that* which she had scarcely before understood to exist—the preference

of her friend for his amiable and accomplished nephew.

"What," said Frank, "was the original cause of disagreement and estrangement between my father and my poor uncle, I never could ascertain. Whatever it was, it existed long before my recollection; and the way in which I have been treated by my father, rendered any hope, even had I wished it, of a confidence on his part most improbable; while my poor uncle, whenever I endeavoured to ascertain the nature of their difference, always evaded my questions, and even wished me to believe, that although they did not meet, they were still on friendly terms. Ah! my poor uncle was a man who had no prejudices—no animosities—but he is gone, and I am—as I said when I closed the eyes which for years have beamed upon me with kindness, and benignity, and affection—I am alone in the world."

"My dear friend," said Amersham, "you must not give way to these feelings. To attempt to stop the current of grief which such a deprivation as the loss of your excellent uncle must be to you, would be vain.

Indulge in that generous and affectionate sorrow of which a heart like yours must be full; but grieve not without hope and confidence, and believe, as far as worldly matters are concerned, you neither are, nor are likely to be 'alone' or friendless—your fortune—"

"Ah!" said Frank, "there it is, Mr. Amersham—it is *that* which pains me the most. My poor dear uncle's last words, as you heard them, referred to his will—it is at his lawyer's in Lincoln's-inn. What am I —what ought I to do? it may contain some directions as to his funeral. Oh! is it come to *this*, my dear uncle? am I talking of the funeral of the kindest relation I ever possessed? It must be so—these, I know, are events inevitable, but—I cannot—no—I should myself die before I could summon resolution to write to these solicitors upon such a subject—mixing so soon after the transition of that blessed spirit to another and a better world, the common concerns of our lives, with the feelings which now occupy my whole mind."

Amersham, who, as well as his charming wife, sympathized most cordially with poor

Frank, felt it necessary—not of course being unnerved by the event which had prostrated the spirit of their young friend—to urge him to action, to point out the absolute necessity of sending to the solicitors, and begging one of the firm to come down with the will, which he believed to have been lodged in their possession. He eventually succeeded—not in inducing Frank to write, but in getting him to permit *him* to write to the lawyers; nor would Amersham have carried even that point, so sacrilegious did Frank consider the act, had not Mrs. Amersham pressed upon him the probable fact to which he had himself previously alluded—that some desire might be expressed in the will which it would be his duty, as well as his inclination, to comply with.

It was certainly somewhat unpropitious to the fate of George Grindle, that Jane's dearest friends should have become, just at this particular point of her history, intimately acquainted with his younger brother, and acquainted with him under the peculiar circumstance of his uncle's illness and death—a combination of events which served to in-

crease his claims to attention and regard. However, when Bruff had given the word of command, and Sir George had hoisted the signal of distress, nothing one can anticipate within the range of probability, or we might almost say, possibility, seems likely to occur, finally to change Jane Bruff's destiny, although the present event might perhaps delay its consummation.

Many people may, and perhaps will think, whatever Bruff's anxieties about the baronetcy *might* be, that if it could be shown to him that the alternative between his daughter's marrying the one son or the other of Sir George Grindle, was her happiness or misery, no man could be so obstinate and obdurate, considering how slight the difference between their fortunes apparently was, would hesitate which course to pursue. But the reader should understand, that with all Bruff's abruptness, bearishness, (or, as those who liked him least, called his brutality) even if he *had* lent himself to this transfer—not of affections, but of husbands—Sir George, on the other side, would have set his face decidedly against the exchange.

One of the subjects of irritation on the part of the baronet against Frank was, the annoying consciousness of his future independence of *him*, and of his estates. George was mixed up in all his affairs—George's consent was essential in all questions of entailed property—George's involvements, and those of his father were, in fact, family matters with which Frank, with his younger brother's small allowance, had nothing whatever to do. If Frank married Jane under his circumstances, Sir George would benefit nothing; it was by the accession of fortune to his heir that he was to be released; and therefore giving Bruff credit for the most disagreeable and repulsive qualities with which a great big "soldier officer" ever was blessed, we ought to do him so much justice as to admit, that if any question had arisen, or should arise, as to the alteration of what surgeons professionally call "the first intention," the baronet would have out-heroded the colonel in favour of the only son about whom he was interested in the slightest degree. Naturally, or rather unnaturally, Sir George disliked his second boy, and the

fact of his prospective independence increased the dislike to hatred.

"So," said Smylar to Bruff, "that was the reason of your not bringing the lover—to be sure, it would have been downright indecent, considering the death of so near a relative."

"True," said Bruff; "but what business had that Mr. Leeson to die this week—this particular week—just on the edge of a conclusion—all settled, and now I suppose the whole affair must be postponed for a fortnight or three weeks."

"At least a month *I* should say," replied Smylar; "a week will of course elapse, or something near it, before the funeral, and then the respect for the memory of the deceased—"

"That'll do—that'll do," interrupted the colonel; "in that respect, as a joker would say, I think we need care but little. However, as you say, and as Lady Gramm says, and she is tip-top authority, we must not travel too hastily; besides, it might set Jane more against the young man than she is already, if the—what is that thing you were

telling me of last night—the baked mutton —what—"

"The funeral baked meats!" said Smylar, "I quoted Shakspeare—"

"Ah! that'll do," said the colonel; "I didn't recollect the name, but what I meant was, we mustn't march double quick time after this uncle is buried; and my difficulty is, Smylar, that as Jane and I are two, as they say, and I will not be the dupe of her pretences, my difficulty is, not knowing exactly what to do with her during the interval between this and her marriage. As for Lady Gramm as a companion, why, to say the truth, I think she rather turns up her nose at the Grindles; and her toady—her shadow, the poem writer, Miss Pheezle—she'll set her all wrong with—with—what do they call that which people in love are supposed to be full of?"

"Do you mean sentiment, colonel?" said Mrs. Smylar.

"That'll do," said the colonel, "sentiment —yes—that's it—my poor wife was sentimental; she never could make me comprehend what it was or is; but I don't think it

a good plan to leave her here in the hands of those people."

"Will you be advised by *me*, colonel?" said Mrs. Smylar.

"Why—eh?" said Bruff, "I think I generally am, and I don't know that I could do better."

"Well then," said Smylar—"only do not betray me to Jane—let her go for a week or a fortnight on a visit to her dear friends the Amershams. I can tell you this, and I tell it you as I tell you every thing, in perfect truth and sincerity, that there are no people so anxious for her marrying Sir George's son as they—nay, only don't be angry—all I do, Heaven knows," and hereabouts up went the expressive eyes, so infallibly effective at Bullock's-smithy, "I do for your good, and for that of the dear child—she has told me this fact—and even shown me letters from Mrs. Amersham, pressing upon her the importance of obeying your wishes in this matter."

"Why," said the colonel, "I thought you told me quite the contrary."

"So I did," said Smylar; "but it was before certain things came to my knowledge.

Thoughts are thoughts—fancies are fancies—but when one sees a thing written down in black and white, it is beyond a doubt—I know the truth and justice of what I am now saying."

The axiom is somewhat musty, which proclaims the absolute and essential necessity of remarkably retentive memories to persons possessing highly imaginative powers; and certainly in any other establishment, the fact that Mrs. Smylar had argued and advised in three different and distinct ways, touching the Amershams and their views and intentions, within the last five or six days, must have had its effect: but not in that in which she fluttered and flourished were these discrepancies and contradictions in the slightest degree important; in the great, thick, buzmuz head of Colonel Bruff, every thing was confusion and mist—there was an incapacity first of comprehension and next of retention—it was as if his skull had been made of putty—he took an impression easily, but when a new one was made, it had the effect of driving out the one which had been made before. Smylar, who could fence, and shift

her ground, and hit here, and touch there, always found quite sufficient reason for the opinions she gave, or the advice she proffered; and if by any inconceivable chance, the big soldier-officer did recollect enough—as it seems he did upon the present occasion—and think she had spoken *per contra* before, she was always sure to bring herself right, by a display of her anxiety and interest, and a detail of her further intelligence and information.

Now, the reader may here be so far let into the secret of Mrs. Smylar's policy—the object of which must perhaps by this time have become too clear and evident to be any secret at all—as to be told that although she knew that Mr. Frank Grindle was associated and even domesticated with the Amershams at Broadstairs, it did not form any part of her scheme to let her gallant and disagreeable master into that secret. The colonel knew that Frank was at Broadstairs, and that Frank's uncle, Mr. Leeson, had died there, and that the remains of that respected gentleman were to be removed for interment first to London, and then to the church of his

own parish in Hertfordshire; but he did *not* know of the intimacy which had sprung up between Frank and the Amershams, nor did he even know that the Amershams *were* at Broadstairs,—as how should he? unless enlightened by the person who thought it more beneficial to keep him in the dark.

Bruff had estranged himself from his daughter. Frank never corresponded with his family; the letter which he had dispatched to his father on the death of his uncle, merely contained a plain, and what might be called an official detail of that melancholy event. He did not know that the Amershams were actually on their road from the sea-side towards their own house, nor did he even surmise that they had obtained a promise from Frank to pass with them a few days under their hospitable roof, after the funeral was over. This intelligence, which Smylar had obtained from Jane, was the mainspring of her actions; if she could keep this secret, and yet persuade the colonel to permit Jane to go for a few days on a visit to the same family, she flattered herself it would be a great *coup*.

Sir George, whose feelings were unequivocal towards his departed brother-in-law, felt —(felt, except indeed as it concerned himself, is perhaps too strong a word), that he could not well remain in town, and decline attending to pay the last mournful duties to his departed connexion; and George, who found from certain hints of the colonel's, that Jane's delicacy would be wounded by any attempts of his in the way of visits at this particular period, resolved, in order to get rid of the difficulty, and in fact, of an association with Frank, to leave London quietly for a week—with the understanding that the *aspirant* might be permitted to write to his fair intended, and in the hope that she would reply to his letters.

The combination of affairs was just now becoming as intricate as it was delicate; Smylar was actively alive, and vigorously indefatigable in taking her measures; but one word—one whisper might in a moment destroy the whole fabric of her air-built castle, and ruin her for ever in her master's opinion. If Colonel Bruff did not see Jane, Jane would not accept any invitation from

the Amershams; for to her it would have seemed an almost treasonable disobedience to leave home without the farewell kiss and blessing—however ungraciously bestowed—of her father. If they met, Smylar knew enough of Jane to feel sure that she would not go to the Amershams without letting him know that her future brother-in-law was expected there as a visiter. This was a dilemma out of which she—even she—did not clearly see her way.

Upon mature consideration she thought that the best, indeed the only plan, would be to bring about a reconciliation, and an interview between Jane and her father, having previously lectured the young lady into the commission of so much disobedience—merely negative as she proposed to prove to her—as would be involved in her not telling papa who was expected at the Amershams. This was no falsehood—she certainly knew a fact—but she was in no way bound to impart it. If the colonel had suspected or imagined such a thing, and had asked her about it, the affair would have been wholly different; but no—Mrs. Smylar having given him the idea of

letting her go to the Amershams, where according to her representation of their feelings, he felt satisfied she would be safer than any where else, he, old Buz-muz (as his servants called him) never would think it necessary to enquire who the others of the party were likely to be, and certainly least of all, without a much greater degree of enlightenment than he was destined to receive from Smylar, was he likely to ask a leading question touching Mr. Francis Grindle.

Smylar was early at work, and having succeeded in soothing the colonel, her next business was to—what she called "tutor" his daughter; and really one cannot be very much surprised, that when a girl so treated and so situated as Jane Bruff was, heard Smylar's most plausible doctrines as to the not being obliged to tell more than one is asked, and as to the pleasure and comfort she would enjoy with her friends the Amershams, strongly contrasted with the wretchedness and sorrow she must inevitably suffer in London during the next fortnight; and without even glancing at the gratification she might feel in the society of Mr. Francis

Grindle, her future brother-in-law; merely remarking, that if she did consider it necessarily dutiful to mention to her papa the fact that he would be included in the family circle there, she would by making the communication, decidedly and unquestionably provoke his absolute refusal to her going; considering all these things, one cannot be surprised at her falling into the snares of the tempter and deceiver.

Besides, she felt that she had wronged her dear friend Emma—she felt anxious again to see her—to be domesticated with her—in fact, to convince her that whatever might have been the circumstances or impressions under which she had felt some kind of temporary distrust, they were all gone, vanished, and buried in oblivion. And so, having prepared the parties for a meeting, Mrs. Smylar entered Miss Jane Bruff's boudoir, and announced to her that her papa wished to see her in the library—the back parlour being so called, from having two hanging shelves against the wall half filled with old army-lists, the court-guide, the calendars, and some

eight or ten odd volumes of else forgotten old magazines.

"Now, Miss Jane," said Smylar, as she was ushering her down the stairs, "mind—not a word about Mr. Frank—you will be shut up here in this dark, dusty hole of a house if you do."

"But if my father asks," said Jane, "what company they have staying in the house—"

"Say you don't know," said Smylar.

"But how can I say so when I *do* know?" said Jane.

"You *don't* know what company they *have* now," said Smylar; "Mr. Frank doesn't go there till the day after to-morrow."

"Ah! well," said Jane Bruff, and the next moment she stood in her father's presence—ran towards him, and throwing her arms about his neck, kissed his cheek, and moistened it with her tears.

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff, pushing her not too gently from him. "Well—there—sit down—all this has happened very unluckily, this death in the family—I hate postponements—they don't look prosperous

—but still decency must be observed—and so—as I have heard that your friends the Amershams wish you to go to them for a few days—why—upon consideration, I think it best you should—it's all very painful—but Sir George and your intended have left town—you will hear from George no doubt—he was coming here—I desired Smylar to tell you the reason he didn't—all bad—however, only a short delay—so—if you like—the carriage and horses are at your service—when should you like to go?"

"To-morrow, if you please," said Jane.

"That'll do," said the colonel; "but listen to me—hear what I have to say. I have great reliance upon the good sense and good heart of Mrs. Amersham—don't think quite so much of him—but now—although I think I can rely upon your obedience to my will and wishes—and, moreover, if necessary, I will enforce it—from what I hear, Mrs. Amersham is all in favour of your marriage with young Grindle—now, what I have to desire of you is, that you will attend reasonably to what she says—she knows the world, and must see what an advantageous match

it is for you—so, as you value my affection, attend to her advice."

"My inclination as well as my duty," said Jane, "will induce me to comply with your wishes."

"Have they got a large party with them?" said Bruff.

Here, in spite of the lessons of Smylar, who was in the lobby, with her ear at the keyhole, poor Jane could not control a sort of tremulousness, which the colonel seemed to remark.

"No dandies — no fine gentlemen with more brass than gold?"

"Not that I know of," said Jane.

"And that Mr. Miles Blackmore," said the colonel, "is he there—he has been in France—is he come back?"

"I know he is *not*," said Jane Bruff; "but, my dear father, what is he to me, even if he were?"

"I don't know," said the colonel, who seemed rather excited; "but I know he is a great friend of the Amershams, or of Mrs. Amersham — or of somebody belonging to the family. I knew something of his father

—about as great a puppy as ever swaggered —every dog has his day, and he had his— but it was only when George Grindle and I were talking about him, that I traced the relationship to my old aversion."

"I know, sir," said Jane; "that Mr. Blackmore is not in England, because it so happens that Emma mentioned in one of her latest letters to me, that he was in France."

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff. "I have no more to say. You are now engaged —affianced; and though George and his father have thought it right to go out of the way rather than go to this old Leeson's funeral, you will receive and answer whatever letters George writes to you; and, under the circumstances, I don't think you can be placed in better hands than in those of your friend Emma; so to-morrow you may depart. Give my compliments to them—of course you will wish them to be at the wedding?"

"Indeed yes," said Jane, "and I thank you sincerely, my dear father, for affording me the opportunity of inviting them."

"Pshaw, child, pshaw," said the colonel, "be reasonable, be tractable, do as I order

you, and we never shall quarrel. I hope and trust that the line of conduct I have felt myself bound to adopt towards you during the last few days will convince you, Jane, that I am not to be trifled with."

And so, with another filial kiss, and another paternal "that'll do," Jane and her father parted, much to the satisfaction of Smylar, who now flattered herself that with ordinary luck she should reap the full benefit of her long continued machinations.

The generous Mr. Leeson had fulfilled all his promises made during his lifetime to Frank. His Hertfordshire estates, besides some little property in Sussex, he had bequeathed to his amiable nephew, and somewhere about forty thousand pounds in the funds, besides a considerable quantity of personal property. The acquirement of these only served to make him more hateful to George and his father, who when they ascertained that all his expectations had been realized, were not only base enough to be envious of his prosperity, but mean enough to regret the course they had previously pursued towards him; being however too cun-

ning not to be certain that any immediate change in their manner, or any attempted advances towards his affections or friendship, would be easily seen through and appreciated by the young successor to his uncle's wealth. Of him we shall probably hear more presently; at this moment we must call the reader's attention to a less agreeable subject.

Charming, pure, unsophisticated, and generous as Jane was when so short a time since we first knew her, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the progressive mischief which Smylar's too surely increasing influence over her young mistress is working. The worst of falsehoods is, to high minds, the *suppressio veri;* or rather, in plain English, the negative falsehood of equivocation. Of this the ingenuous Jane Bruff had, upon the occasion of her interview with her father, just related, been guilty in its degree; and the close reasoner, or the severe scrutineer, will scarcely consider it as secondary. She knew that Francis Grindle was, or would be at the Amershams, while she was on her visit to them. Smylar had provided her with the

evasion as to his not *being* actually at their house *then*. She knew that Miles Blackmore, for whom we know she was not in the slightest degree interested, beyond the ordinary sentiment or feelings of friendship, would *not* be there. Her father, never imagining or suspecting even the probability of her meeting Frank during her absence, presses upon her the question referring to the chance of her association with Blackmore, about whose flirtation with her he had heard something, and against whom, arising out of some recollections unfavourable to his father, he had conceived and still entertained a prejudice.

In this state of affairs, six months before, Jane would have told her father, not only whom she did not expect to meet, but whom she did. She knew in her own heart and mind that Frank Grindle was by ten thousand degrees a more dangerous rival to his half-brother than Miles Blackmore, or any body else she had ever seen. His name was never whispered to the parental Bruff as a probable visitor at the Amershams'. This

was the *suppressio veri* of which Jane Bruff, before she had been driven into the care of Smylar, would never have been guilty.

But mark the assiduousness of the fiend's insidiousness. The information the reader has just received as to the disposition of Mr. Leeson's property, was derived by Smylar from the colonel, accompanied and illustrated by a few of those expletives with which he was accustomed to decorate, adorn, and illuminate his more animated details; and it was instantly carried to Jane with a suggestion, too plausible and even too just to be denied, that as the younger brother's unencumbered fortune was considerably larger than the elder brother's, no question could exist, when the preference on her part was so decided, as to which of the brothers she should marry.

To a mind like Jane's, so wholly unused to such sudden reverses and agitations as hers had within the last few days been subjected to, all the turmoil, the anxiety, the necessity for saying *this* while meaning something else, and the importance of doing *that* which it was essential to make her father believe never had entered her head, was bewildering; and

without reference to any ulterior object, the prospect of once again reposing under the roof of the Amershams, although but for a short period, was something delightful.

Little did she, poor girl, think why she was permitted so great an indulgence—nor even yet calculate the policy of *her* under whose influence she obtained it. To her the permission to accept Emma's invitation was in itself delightful—it indicated at once the postponement of the ceremony—the certainty of being again domesticated with her best friends—the equal certainty of an evasion of the infliction of the visits of George and his father, and of a relief from the solitude of a London house, varied only by the scoldings of the colonel, or the tawdry absurdities of Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle; and so she took "the goods the gods provided," without making any reflection, except upon the wonderful kindness of papa.

However, in blessed ignorance of the causes which produced to *her* such agreeable effects, Jane took her departure the following day, drawn by the venerable Sugar and Salt, driven by the eighteen-stone coachman, and

attended by Harris, her maid, and William Simmons, her footman.

* * * * *

"Governor," said George to his respectable parent as they were dissipating in seclusion at Brighton, to which they had retired on the occasion of the funeral, at which they resolved not to be present, "this pitch over of old Leeson's is a black job for us—how long will it put us out?"

"Why," said the worthy baronet, "I don't know, George. The fashionable rules about decency are now vastly elastic—suitable to all cases. I don't see, considering we never cared for the man, and he evidently never cared for us—I should say putting it off another week would do."

"Splendidly!" said George; "only, what is the stuff about no mourning at weddings? What! leave it off for the day and on with it again in the morning?"

"As far as I am personally concerned," said the baronet, "that difficulty is easily mastered, for I mean to wear none. What the deuce have I to do with him? I married

his sister, and she died. When we were married she hadn't tenpence-halfpenny in the world. 'Her face was her fortune.' What then? I hated her relations; and this Leeson used to bore my life out about all sorts of matters with which I had no concern—in which I took no interest, and about which I knew nothing—and so, to use a conventional phrase, George, I cut him."

"I see," said George; "you cut, and *he* didn't come again."

"You've hit it," answered the father; "he was proud but poor. By some bedivilment, as the Duchess of Daventry says, one of his schemes turned out well, and he became, in course of time, exceedingly rich—and then—"

"Ah," said George, "then, governor, I suppose, *you* tried to come again, and *he* cut."

"I was civil to him," said the baronet, "asked him to my house—but no—he would stand aloof. He always expressed his partiality for that stupid, heavy nephew of his, and now—"

"Ah, that's it, governor," said George. "Now our friend Spooney takes the shine out of us. I don't suppose that fellow Frank owes five hundred pounds on the face of the earth. There's a pretty go. Why, governor, taking our encumbrances into what my friend Frank Poggle used to call the 'cackle-actions,' he'll beat us to sticks."

"Ah," said Sir George, "but then with the title, and this girl under your lee—why, with her money and common prudence you can nurse and get round."

"So, perhaps will she," said George, "and then you know it will all come to the same in the end."

"Not a bit of it," said the baronet; "'sufficient to the day is the evil thereof,' says the best book in the world."

"Ah!" said George; "governor, you are like the other old gentleman I have heard of—you can go a long way for quotations to serve your own turn."

"Thank you, master George," said the baronet: "not that exactly; all I mean to say is, if as you get old you find yourself going down the hill, put on the drag to save

yourself; and your children will save themselves afterwards."

"Thank you, good sir, I owe you ten," said George. "No theory is good, as Frank would tell us, that won't stand the test of practice. I begin to feel how much I am obliged to you, governor, for giving me this bit of advice—seeing, as it seems to me, that you have acted upon it yourself. Ha! ha! governor, I've done you now—a regular catch out, governor."

"Not a bit of it," said Sir George. "No, I think, as far as our relative ages have permitted us to live together as men—and men of the world—there never were a father and son more *d'accord* than we. We quarrel about nothing, George."

"Strong reason for *that*, governor," said George; "we have deuced little to quarrel about. However, the sooner we get out of the scrape, the better; because besides all the stumpy-ups in the way of annuities and insurances, the little woman in France will be soon looking for something to keep matters going—'*Quelque chose pour faire le potage*,' as my friend Tim Huggins says. Now the

announcement of this 'union,' as they call it, with Miss Bruff, would have settled and stopped all that."

"Ah, but this death," said the baronet, "to be sure—yes, and just as that drive would have settled the thing."

"I was rather glad that the drive tumbled through," said George. "You see the girl is what I call a regular dowdy. Her bonnets are below contempt. As to sitting at her ease in a cab, she can have no notion of it. She would keep putting her hands over the apron, as a rabbit pats with his paws over the front of his hutch."

"Come, come," said Sir George; "there *is* a proverb which enjoins a man to speak well of the bridge that carries him over. Don't you think you ought to keep that in view?"

"I hope, governor," said George, "my little bridge, as you call her, mayn't some of these days bring me into the Court of *Arches*."

"And afterwards into the House of *Piers*, I suppose," continued the vivacious baronet, resolved to rival his son even as a punster.

"No, no, rely upon it she is a good girl, with odd notions—as all good girls have. To be sure, this delay is the greatest imaginable bore, and for more reasons than you can have assigned; but so it is with *me*—every *coup* of my life has *manqué'd*, by some absurd and unlooked for accident or incident."

"I suppose," said George, "Master Frank will do fine after this—cut us, perhaps, and take a fresh start."

"Not he," said the worthy baronet; "it isn't in him. He hasn't the spirit to take his place in society where he ought certainly now to assume it. Dried fishes—bits of earth—twisted shells—fossil pigs, which in other days had six or eight legs—mammoths' toes, or the things he calls the hichthysorchorses, or something of that kind, which he would, if one would let him, prove beyond any doubt lived and flourished long before this world was made, and were sent here from some other, to astonish the natives, Adam and Eve, as curiosities. Upon these things, and the people who write about them, lecture about them, and, as I believe, make them, he will spend all his money."

"It's wonderful, governor," said George, "how these lecturing chaps—who are called men of science—get on."

"Ah, George," said the baronet, "you and I have our opinions upon such points, and I believe I lost myself several degrees in Miss Jenny's favour by expressing them. However, I do think if we managed matters well, we might somehow contrive to bring Frank forward a bit—I mean after the dew of grief has dried off his glassy eyes, we might get him to—to—"

"Fork out, d'ye mean, governor?" said George.

"My idea," said the baronet; "but, as the man in the play says, 'infinitely better expressed.' You see, the more one thinks of things, especially family matters, why the more we are inclined to meet and to conciliate. Now that the bore Leeson is dead, we might, I think, get round—"

"I doubt it, governor," said George. "After our retreat from the funeral, I think we are done."

"What!" said the baronet; "d'ye think that we should have swallowed all past

grievances and gone the whole hog at once?"

"Why," said George, twisting his curls through his fingers and affecting to look shy, "if you mean by going the whole hog that we ought to have followed the old bore, as you call him, to the grave—that I should think would perhaps have been the thing to have done."

"Then, do you fancy that I have acted rashly, George?" asked the parent.

"Not rashly," answered the son, "but what I call rather too naturally. Of course as people live now, at least in our circle, a father naturally hates his son, because he feels obliged to do something for him to keep him up in the world; and the son naturally hates his father, because by living he keeps him out of a deuced sight more. But I think making all due allowance for your uncommon dislike of Frank, in which I both filially and fraternally participate, it would have been more prudent, knowing what he expected from your departed brother-in-law, to have kept in with him a little more than we did. But there it is, governor,—neither you nor

I can sham. We can't act parts—ingenuousness is our great failing;—and I don't care—I would rather be sincere and unpopular, than the most successful hypocrite that ever made his game."

"*Tel père, tel fils*," said the baronet. "Gad, George, you are a regular chip of the old block; and even now, knowing as we do, at least by all accounts, that Frank is, to use a city phrase, as good a man as you, if not a better, I don't think I could appear civil to him, although he *is* my son. Affectionate I never could be."

"Well," said George, "there I differ entirely with you, governor. As for affection, I can't pretend to say much about it; but as to civility, and what I should consider half-brotherly friendship, I am quite prepared, if he is prepared to receive it, to offer him all that kind of notice and attention."

"I'm sorry now," said Sir George, after some minute or two's reflection, "I am sorry now that we did not go to the funeral. What would it have signified? True, I quarrelled with the man when he was alive; but one wars not with the dead. I'm vexed—I really am."

"Couldn't we write to say we would go now," said George; "just say that we have managed to get off an engagement?"

"No, no," replied the baronet, "it is too late now—we have taken our line, and must maintain it."

This private dialogue between Sir George and his son, although as full of platitudes and common-places as the best drawing-room conversation in London—is useful in the course of our narrative, as exemplifying, when all the world is shut out, the general character of the sire and son, as well as the self-conviction of either or both, that they were two of the most amiable, straightforward, ingenuous, candid, and honourable persons breathing. This is precisely what every man—ay, and every woman—in this world feels; they commit crimes, but then they have such a multitude of excuses and qualifications for what they have done, that the crimes become in their own minds—and that seriously and conscientiously too—not only no crimes at all, but rather actions the result of oppression, of cruelty, neglect, or some such sort of thing.

A man carries off his friend's wife—all the world cry out, especially the women. Trace that defection, during the whole progress of the estrangement of the wife from the husband—you will find that both parties are so blind to the real state of their case, that neither of them thinks of crime. Either of them would argue, if such affairs admitted of confidence, upon the purity and genuineness of their affections; and so to them they *are* pure and genuine, while passion hoodwinks the mind, and absorbs all feelings but the one; nor ever did there occur a case of the nature to which we now refer, in which the woman, under the same delusion, did not make herself believe that somehow she was justified by her husband's conduct in the sin of abandoning him.

Scarcely any man (and still more rarely any woman), is professedly and avowedly, even to himself, wicked. In early youth, when young gentlemen consider profligacy a feather in their caps, they talk much of proceedings in which they take a much smaller share than they would have it understood they do; they like the credit of dissipation,

and so to maintain their characters, actually give in to it to a certain extent. This is vanity, coxcombry, or what you please—but it is not wickedness. They advance in life, and fall into all the allurements and entanglements incidental to the present state of society. They are led on to do—what to the calm, contemplating spectator, are things wrong and unjustifiable; but as in the case we have before noticed, they are the unconscious actors in those scenes, and sink under an influence perhaps only equally and mutually with some other infatuated person.

Now, what was the case with George Grindle? What was the history of Ellen? How was *that?* When we have just now heard him proclaim himself as unable to act a part or play the hypocrite, to what extent in that very instance had he deceived and justified himself?

There he was, beloved by a charming girl with whom he had been for some years domesticated—she, devoted to him, and the mother of his child. How did this connexion begin? It was clear that Ellen was satisfied that she herself was free from sin or

shame—so must her mother have thought —unless indeed, the mental blindness which we are attempting to describe, affected the whole family. Under what circumstances could George Grindle have imagined himself still right, and honest, and honourable, in seducing from her maternal home this beautiful creature? and under what other circumstances could he flatter himself as being one of the most candid of men, when he returned her upon that mother's hands, child and all, promising to revisit her in a few weeks, before the expiration of which he knew that she must find herself entirely and finally cast off from his protection.

Now, was there ever a stronger instance of the unconsciousness of one's own follies and vices than this adduced? Yet so goes the the world; and an hour's "hunt-up" in town would bring before us fifty cases of even greater atrocity than this, which, if the principal actors in them were permitted, with the talent that all such men—no matter what the turn of it—must possess, you would, if you gave them time, find all of them (even if you yourself were not) fully

satisfied that they were the most excellent, amiable creatures that ever existed, but who had been some time or other imposed upon, duped, deceived, and even run away with, in spite of all their own meritorious struggles and moral remonstrances.

The reader yet knows but little of Frank's character and qualities; he has hitherto received his information at secondhand—upon hearsay evidence; but he may, perhaps, of himself have seen sufficient to feel tolerably certain that vindictiveness formed no attribute of his mind—that his natural affection for his father had been chilled by the conduct which Sir George had pursued towards him, and the marked preference he had exhibited towards his elder and half-brother. But this oppression had produced no animosity—nay, it had been for several years his constant endeavour to soothe away the little differences which occasionally existed between the baronet and his favourite son. But his genius, his tastes, his habits, were so totally at variance with those of his nearest relations, that it was the enjoyment which the society of his kind uncle afforded him, surrounded by a

circle of men and women of exalted talent and varied accomplishments, so perfectly contrasted with all he heard and saw at home, that kept him away from his father and half-brother, and not the harsh treatment which he received from them. He could not shut his eyes to the profligacy and recklessness of manners and conversation which so painfully —to him—characterized the domestic scenes in which, almost revoltingly, the father and son were actors; but all that struggle was past; he had now become the independent master of a fine property, and was, as Sir George has said, "as good a man, if not better, than his brother;" and therefore is it, that we, who (without any offence, we hope,) may be naturally supposed to know a little more of his qualities and character than even the reader, say, that we think the change of his circumstances involves the strongest probability of his catching with pleasure at the olive-branch, if his father and brother showed any disposition to offer it, although the positive and almost abrupt refusal to pay the least respect to the memory of Mr. Leeson certainly did not at the present

moment afford any probability that they would do so.

One thing, however, is certain—the death of Mr. Leeson has effected a stir on the family chess-board; we must moreover admit, that the last move does not appear altogether favourable to Jane's adversaries. The delay which she insisted upon, and which even her father was afraid or ashamed to refuse after the disinterested expostulations of Mrs. Smylar, was, as we know, for many reasons most inconvenient to the bridegroom elect. The domiciliation of Jane with Frank, at a time when Frank, or rather the lady who had become his zealous advocate, could talk, not with hope and encouragement of his expectations, but with pleasure and confidence of his actual possessions, augured much, threatened much; and this domiciliation never could have occurred had Frank's request that his father and brother would attend the funeral of his uncle, been either granted or civilly or kindly declined. The refusal, couched in the terms it was, at once stopped all further correspondence between them; as no doubt the correspondence, as far

as it went, had been debated in council between Frank and the Amershams, nobody can form a second opinion as to the course that the high-minded, noble-spirited Emma advised. Recollect too, of what materials this council was composed—a woman and two men—one of the men the object of her interest and care, full of gratitude for the kindness and consideration with which he had been treated by his host and hostess, and the other man—her husband.

Thus was it less from any wish or desire to thwart old Colonel Bruff's machinations for the establishment of his daughter, and much farther from any thought of exciting her to disobedience, that Emma felt anxious that Frank Grindle should be permitted to do himself justice, and, if necessary, have the opportunity, either personally or through her, of explaining to Jane the real state of the case as it existed between him and his father.

But what were the feelings which occupied the mind of that said Jane, when, after having breakfasted with her father, and after a sort of semi-lecture on future duty, and on the absolute necessity of answering George's

letters in the tone which he prescribed, and having received a parting kiss from the gallant officer, she found herself again in the carriage, retracing her road to the house whence she had been so recently summoned, not only to receive the addresses of Mr. Grindle, but to surrender her heart and person into his possession and custody?

Her thoughts flew rapidly from one subject to another. She could not but feel how strikingly her mind, her character, and her position were changed from what they were when she last passed the well-known tree by the road-side, near which she had last caught sight of Amersham and Miles Blackmore. She had arrived in town the most ingenuous and dutiful of daughters, imploring rather than protesting against a forced marriage; but receiving, as she was commanded to do by her father, the advances of the man she felt she never could esteem; dreading, hating, and shunning, as if she were a basilisk, the insidious, artful hypocrite Smylar, recoiling from her touch, and shuddering at her approach. What was the case now?

Jane had been closetted with Smylar late

the preceding evening, in council against her father. She had passed two hours at and after breakfast with that father, and during that period, and while performing the little duties of the breakfast-table, which she had been for so many years accustomed to perform, her whole mind and thoughts were occupied with the fact that she was going to meet, to be domesticated with the man to whom, of all others upon earth, her father objected, and that with an ulterior view—for Smylar had so far gained upon her, as to induce her to listen to her entire project, which had, as the reader may easily suppose, nothing less for its object than her decided rejection of the one brother in favour of the other.

But was it possible (it was the question Jane asked herself on the way to Amersham's)—was it possible, that by an imperceptible process and progress she should in so short a space of time have become the deceiver of her father, the mistruster of Emma, and the friend of Smylar. She trembled at her own reflections. But then, as we have before said, then came the conso-

latory qualifications, that she had been driven into the association by her father's harshness —that Smylar, by the interest she had displayed in the whole of the later proceedings, had convinced her that she must have been originally deceived in her character, and that she was at heart a kind and considerate woman.

Jane, when she stepped into the carriage, was considerably affected, and would have wept more than she actually did weep, had not one of her father's "that'll-do's" roused her to a sense of the impropriety of exhibiting her feelings before the servants. She, however, received some consolation from seeing Smylar whisper something kindly in the ear of her maid Harris, and shake her affectionately by the hand before she mounted the coach-box; Jane's footman travelling solitarily in the rumble, which throughout the season had maintained its place at the back of the family coach.

Jane's mind had by no means recovered its serenity, nor had she, while left to herself on the return to scenes of former comfort, reconciled to herself the many points of her

own conduct since she had left them, when she found herself at the lodge gates of Amersham's place.

Then it was that she felt a sickly pain on her chest—a dizziness seemed to affect her eyes—she could not cry, but she trembled—her face flushed—she hastily let down the carriage-window, as if air, or, indeed, any change of circumstances, would relieve her. A thousand thoughts crowded into her mind as she was driven through the shrubberies—she thought on what she *was* when she was last there, and on what she was *then*. Luckily the time for reflection was short—the consciousness of her defection from Emma's judgment and advice made her dread to meet her. The end, however, was achieved—the carriage stopped—the door was opened—the steps were down, and in an instant she was folded in the arms of her affectionate friend.

Her welcome was as warm as ever, and she was forthwith led, or almost carried, to what was always considered and even called "*her* room," by her affectionate hostess. There a flood of tears relieved her tempora-

rily, but still there was a weight upon her heart and mind, of which, when she was last in that room, she had not been conscious.

Truth to say, the change *had* been great—all the history, if Jane should have the courage to tell it to Emma, would necessarily occupy much time in the narration. Emma saw that her dear friend was wholly unequal to conversation at the moment, and, therefore, having recommended quiet, and having consigned her to the care of Miss Harris (the devoted friend of Mrs. Smylar), she left her to rest until dinner-time—the only information Jane received after her arrival having been that Mr. Francis Grindle was not expected till the next day.

CHAPTER XV.

At no period of our lives is the heart so attuned to sympathy as in the time of sorrow and bereavement; softened by the sufferings of the loved and lost object of its affections, it naturally yearns for kindness and consolation, and feels with gratitude the friendly solicitude which seeks to soothe its anguish.

That Francis had been deprived of the friend—emphatically *the* friend—from whom he had experienced continued and unchanging kindness and support, we have the evidence of his own exclamation, on the threshold of the chamber of death, to prove. Driven as it were from his paternal roof, and awed into silence by the fear of ridicule and the excitement of language and conduct which he could not endure, he had uniformly sought

in the house and society of his worthy uncle an asylum from persecution, and a shelter from scenes and conversations, from which, however dutifully inclined towards his father, and affectionately disposed towards his half-brother, his feelings revolted and his taste turned away.

Frank had attended the funeral of this revered and respected relation—he had listened with breathless attention to the beautiful service appointed for the burial of the dead—his eyes were fixed on the black pall which covered the remains of his beloved uncle—they were lifted from the trestles in the church, and borne to the grave; he followed, having in his eyes the image of him whose lifeless corpse was before him—again he heard the voice of the clergyman, again beheld the coffin uncovered, and saw the preparations made for lowering it into its last narrow home—it sank from his sight—the grating of the cords which served to deposit it in its last final resting-place raging in his ears, and the rattling of the dirt upon its lid seemed to announce to him the termination of his happiness on earth.

It was from this fulfilment of his melancholy duties Mr. Francis Grindle was, as soon as circumstances would permit, to proceed to pass a day or two at the Amershams'; and certainly, as the reader may himself conceive, the meeting of Jane with her future half-brother-in-law (for the family were exceedingly particular in never omitting the nice distinction of half-brother) was an event full of interest for many reasons; but more especially as they were to meet, although unknown to him, strongly prepossessed in each other's favour, under the roof of a lady who was devotedly attached to the one, and strongly prejudiced in favour of the other.

Now, whether Mrs. Amersham felt some qualms of conscience in bringing these two exceedingly charming people together at so particular a crisis, without having some other visiters in the house, or whether she thought that by increasing the little party in a very small degree, she might afford the two better opportunities of talking over matters in which she now knew they were both deeply interested; or whether it seemed to her that a little variety, caused by a dash of heartless

vanity and absurdity, might relieve the seriousness of the circle, and almost unconsciously attract the thoughts of Francis Grindle from the subject then nearest his heart, we cannot say: but this we *do* know —she had contrived an arrangement which formed part of her scheme.

Whether, as we say, it were Providential, or only fortunate, that the charming Emma had invited for the succeeding week a lady and her daughter with whom Jane had not previously been much acquainted, and of whom Mr. Francis Grindle actually knew nothing, the reader must guess. On the first blush of the thing, it might appear that such a plan involved a want of feeling: but no; Mrs. Amersham, with great knowledge of human nature, felt satisfied that nothing so well serves to alleviate the sorrow which naturally wears and depresses the heart of the survivor of the lamented lost one, than the bringing the mourner in contact with persons whom they have not before seen, and who therefore cannot in any degree be associated in his or her mind with those who are gone.

The pair—for there were two of them—invited by the Amershams, were a mother and daughter—certainly neither of them favourites with Emma; but the lady's former husband, who was a baronet—his dignity like himself being of very brief duration—had been a connexion of Amersham's, and the lady herself had only a few days before returned to England from the continent; and therefore, beyond any other reasons which she might have had for enlivening the house by their presence, she thought it prudent to exact their promised visit then, as likely to rescue her from any imputation on the part of Colonel Bruff—which she did not think quite impossible when the whole truth came to be known—of her having brought Mr. Francis Grindle into juxta-position and constant association with his daughter Jane during the suspension—not exactly of hostilities—but of the intercourse between her and George.

Lady Cramly, the widow in question, was gay and flighty; voluble in conversation to an extent which is called by some "off-handishness." That she was agreeable in society

cannot be denied; but it must also be confessed—and it is rather difficult with delicacy towards ladies in general to explain *why*—that some portion of her attraction arose from her established, and now unconquerable habit, of seldom, if ever, speaking the truth. The great points of her exaggerations were made for the establishment of her own importance and popularity; her details of every thing connected with herself and her darling daughter Seraphine, were full of descriptions of the sensations they created, of the *éclat* which glorified them, and of the devoted attentions which were paid them wherever they went. Every body who really knew Lady Cramly, gave in with gravity and complacency to her system, of which nobody was more sensitively aware than her daughter, who occasionally endeavoured to emulate the assiduity of the man behind his master's chair, touching the history of the monkey's tail. But the attempt to check, or curb, or control her ladyship (as she liked to be called) generally made matters worse; for not only was Seraphine—poor dear girl—snubbed for her interference, but in order to

establish the accuracy of her first statement, her mother generally doubled its extravagance in her own vindication.

Lady Cramly was, or rather had been during her husband's lifetime, the authoress of a solitary work, upon the memory of which she still lived and revelled. She had published two volumes of travels. In some of the countries which she described she really *had* been, but in others certainly not; but wherever the scene was laid, lady Cramly and Seraphine were at the top of the tree. Princes were proud to hand them to their carriage—crowned heads opened their palaces to receive them—Lady Cramly received medals, orders, and decorations, which never before had been conferred upon females. Seraphine—with a pug nose, low forehead, and high shoulders—had been painted by all the first artists, and modelled by all the first sculptors on the continent. The book of travels had gone through eleven editions—Mr. Liberal, the eminent publisher, had made six thousand pounds by it, and would have made more, only that he had foolishly insisted,

out of respect to the character of her particular friend the Pope, upon expunging the authoress's account of her having waltzed with his Holiness at a masquerade during the carnival, to which he went only to have the pleasure of being her partner. Upon this circumstance, and her having been made a Burgher (or rather Burgheress) at Bruges (the only instance of the honour ever having been bestowed upon a lady), she not unfrequently descanted, and so often had she told the histories amongst others, that all who heard them, including Seraphine herself, felt certain that if nobody else believed them, Lady Cramly did.

It was of Lady Cramly the wag said that her authority ought never to be doubted, for she must always be *re-lied* upon. Nevertheless her poetical prose was very amusing, and upon Waller's principle (we presume) she was certainly an extremely eloquent and entertaining companion.

Seraphine, although plain, was pleasant, unassuming, and unpretending; contented herself in country-houses with playing waltzes

and quadrilles, for brighter and more blooming belles to dance to; aspiring to nothing more than the ordinary and general attention which a modest, well-educated girl commands and receives in society.

The only fear Mrs. Amersham entertained, was that of Lady Cramly being rather too volatile and voluble under the circumstances. But as Francis Grindle was not to be with them until the day after her arrival, she hoped to tame her down in a certain degree before he came, and by permitting, or rather encouraging her to give them an account of her last visit to the continent previously to his making his appearance, moderate and modify her into a suitable associate for the morrow.

Jane, who, whatever interest she might feel in an event which interested Francis Grindle, and whatever observance of a death in the family with which she was about to be connected, was due in the way of form and respect, was of course not personally weighed down with grief for the loss of an individual whom she had never seen, was by no means

displeased at the approach of the widow and her daughter. In fact, feeling the peculiarity of her own case, and apprehending little encouragement from Emma in the way of rejecting George Grindle, and incurring her father's eternal anger, she was rather pleased at the addition to the party.

And now here again we see the peculiarities of a woman's mind. Emma and her husband had talked over Jane's marriage half-a-score times, and both mutually agreed that to encourage her to rebel against the colonel's commands upon the matter, would be to ensure her unhappiness through life. With *her* heart and feelings, the curse of a father denounced against her disobedience would have been the source of continued and never-ending remorse and wretchedness; and yet, believing in and admitting to herself the merits of Francis, and moreover in that belief justifying the preference of Jane, to which she attributes her disinclination to his brother, she invites this very man at a season, as we have already said, of more than usual delicacy, and when the circumstances in which he is

involved render him an object of more than ordinary interest, in order to associate him with the girl of all others with whom he ought not to be associated; this all being done from a kindness, perhaps misjudged, but which originated in a sympathy that inherently and universally exists in female hearts.

While the party at Amersham's is assembling, and before we proceed to detail the dialogues which took place between Emma and Jane, let us take a glance at George Grindle *père*, and George Grindle *fils*. We know where they are, and knowing *that*, can make a tolerably good guess at the sort of life they are likely to lead. But circumstances have been altered within the last four or five days; George, the younger, had calculated that the announcement of his marriage in the London papers would at once decidedly, and in the easiest way for him, have proclaimed the fact to Ellen, which he had not the courage himself to communicate. Matters were now difficult—her anxiety at not hearing from him had driven her to write

to him—her letter must of course be answered—but how? Thus:

"Brighton,
"August —, 184—

"Dear Nelly,

"Only conceive what a bore— I have just got your affectionate letter—delighted to hear about Tiney's tooth—which may be called wisdom beforehand—he unquestionably takes after his mamma. But just listen, you will see the history no doubt in the London papers. Uncle Leeson, as we call him in fun—not that the affair has turned out so funny after all—is "*mort*," as you would say at Versailles, but which, as the admirable Mathews used to observe when I was a genteel youth, means in English, no *more*. He is gone, Nelly, and has left my amiable half-brother a mint of money. Its my own fault—if I had followed him up, and never left him, he would have left some of his stumpy to me. However, he is gone, and I am just as bad off as I was ten days ago, and what can be worse I don't exactly see.

"How's your Ma'? I hope, well, and all snug and comfortable. If it hadn't been for this very unsociable connexion having dropped, as they say, I should of course have written at length before this, and reminded you of my promise, which I hope, my dear Nelly, *you* haven't forgot, of dining with you on the brat's birthday.

"This, however, has upset us, and here am I bunged up with the governor, who would neither go himself, nor let me go to my half-uncle's funeral, which I wished him to do; but being, as you know, uncommonly shy of a 'shell out,' he said No, and so we came down here to mope decently till Monday week. This is called decent—it may be, but it's deucedly dull. However, your kind letter cheers me up a bit; and although, as you know, I am not a finished correspondent, I am delighted to answer you off hand; because when the account of the departure of the elderly Hippopotamus reached you, you might think I was really sorry for him.

"I shall write soon again, when we have recovered from our *grief*—mind *that*, Nelly, and hope to send something to you before I

see you—only, as I say, the governor is the hitch. Rely upon it, Nelly, that gentleman—old I won't call him, not only because he looks nearly as young as myself, but because *old gentleman* is the nick—or rather old nick name for the black dandy with the hoofs and tail, what lives in a 'werry' hot climate. All I hope is, he won't drive me into a corner.

"Give my best love to mamma and to Tiney. Has he lost the stick presented to him by Mr. Somebody, I forget his name at the minute, or has that uncommon fast-going chap made his appearance in Mrs. Eversfield's *salon?* If he should arrive, treat him gently—recollect his good-nature to the brat. Write soon in answer to this, because if the governor keeps his pockets shut much longer, after all the sacrifices I have made in parting from you for the present for fear of him, I may commit some rashness, which would be exceedingly disagreeable to all parties.

"And so adieu, dear Nelly, and believe me,

"Always affectionately yours,

"GEORGE GRINDLE."

This affectionate letter was written and placed on the writing-table of Mr. Grindle, in his lodgings at Brighton; and before the ink with which the concluding part of it was dry, he began the following epistle to Miss Jane Bruff:

"Brighton.

"Dearest Jane,

"That's not too familiar now, my sweet girl; if it had not been for the melancholy circumstance of my poor dear uncle's death you would, within a few hours, have been mine altogether. What an event! My father, as you know, never was upon particularly good terms with him; and in fact, his second marriage made a division in the family which, however much I might sometimes be inclined to laugh about it, nobody in the world could lament more than myself.

"My father's feelings, however, were not to be overcome, and therefore, as you know, we are here. I am delighted to find that the expectations of my half-brother Frank have been realized, and that he inherits a considerable fortune.

"For my own part, I don't see why we should have broken up from London on account of Mr. Leeson's death; but I do whatever I am taught to consider right—principle, as I say to myself, is every thing, and I would rather sacrifice every wish in the world, so that I might act upon its dictates. Else as far as fashion goes, nobody mourns for anybody now. A fortnight's black for a father; if very particular, a month for a mother; and as to not being about as usual because somebody belonging to one is dead—why, as you know, nobody stays at home but the dead man himself, and he would be too glad to come out if he could.

"This sounds as if I were joking on serious matters; but I am vexed at what I think our needless separation. However, your excellent father—one of the best and most agreeable men I ever met with,—seemed to feel that it *was* right, and so did *you*—therefore I must not complain.

"I flatter myself that I have succeeded in getting into the good graces of that excellent creature Mrs. Smylar, whom I respect, because I know she loves *you;* we must

cherish her when we are—by Jove! what was I going to write—I mean, dear Jane, as that capital fellow Jack Topper says in the farce, 'When we two are one.' I think her uncommon.

"I am regularly jealous of your friends the Amershams. Why the deuce couldn't they have invited *me* to meet you? To be sure, I don't know them, but that in these days of promiscuous and unpremeditated hospitality, is nothing. Perhaps I shall put on my brazen mask some day next week, and invade you. Would you be *very* angry?

"The carriage will be quite entirely finished out and out, and beyond every thing, by the end of next week. Briggs considers it what the painters call his '*chef-d'œuvre*,' but which I say ought to be his 'chay Dover.' It is a perfect thing in its way, and I hope you will like it. The only sort of set-off I have for the delay of 'the ceremony,' is the certainty that the 'vehicle,' as the coachmen say, will be all the better for it.

"I need not press you to write to me during your exile, as in course you will. The address to us here you have already; if a change takes

place you shall know it. My father is all of a heap about the postponement; but as I say with the chap who wrote Shakspeare, 'What must be, must; and what can't be cured, must be endured.'

"Adieu, ever affectionately yours,

"GEORGE GRINDLE."

"I think you may present my compliments to your friends the Amershams, under all the circumstances, and just hint at what I have said about the brazen mask."

Now these two letters lay upon Mr. Grindle's table together, ready for folding, putting in envelopes, sealing and directing; and it is not quite impossible that the reader may think, that in the pure spirit of farce, it would be quite allowable, if not even natural, that George Grindle in his agitation, and what the Hebrew schoolmaster called "the confusion of the moment," might put the two letters in the wrong covers, and so create scenes of infinite embarrassment and distress. But no—in real life these fortunate mistakes seldom, if ever, occur. Upon this occasion

nothing of the kind happened. Mr. George Grindle folded, sealed, and addressed his letters exactly as he had originally intended, when he wrote them, that they should be folded, sealed, and addressed. It was not destined that either accident or carelessness should develope to the interesting creatures most deeply concerned the strange peculiarity of their positive and relative positions.

And how were plodding on, during this period, our large and disagreeable colonel and his prime-minister? Of course, Smylar was in daily correspondence with Miss Harris, Jane's maid, and was therefore kept regularly in possession of the history of all the proceedings at the Amershams'. She rather disliked the news, that other visiters were expected besides Frank Grindle; but upon weighing the matter over, she seemed to fall unconsciously into the views of Mrs. Amersham on the subject, which views she herself, as we have already observed, had somewhat unaccountably permitted herself to adopt.

As for what might be called the domestic comfort of Bruff's house, left as he was in

town, it is but just to observe, that in whatever degree Mrs. Smylar might ordinarily contribute to its maintenance, she was just at this time so divided in her views, so puzzled in her mind, and so agitated in her feelings, that matters certainly did not go on so smoothly as usual. The policy she had adopted and the course she was pursuing were of the desperate order; as has been already said, a word, a whisper, a mislaid letter, a misplaced confidence, would blow the whole of her deeplaid schemes to atoms; and while she began to suspect Miss Harris of feeling an interest in the merits and attractions of the colonel's own man, she also trembled to think of the possibility of that gallant officer's taking a very important step, which would utterly destroy her brightest prospects.

He certainly was much more from home than was his wont; he saw less of her when he *was* at home. Smylar could not exactly account for the altered conduct of her master during the last two or three days; and hence arose suspicions, the very existence of which,

in her mind, rendered *her* less agreeable, or serviceable, or whatever it may be called, to the colonel.

Favourites have always plenty of enemies, and one of the colonel's servants, who knew (not that she seemed to try to conceal) the ultimate object of her hopes and wishes, suggested, somewhat hypothetically to be sure, that when the only daughter of a gentleman of "master's" time of life, was going to be married, it was natural enough that he himself should look out for somebody who could compensate him for the loss of her society.

Now, so far as this opinion went, nobody more cordially agreed in it than Mistress Smylar; but when this said servant began to deduce from his hypothesis something like a belief which existed in his mind, that the colonel was becoming exceedingly attentive to Lady Gramm, Mrs. Smylar's feelings and sentiments immediately underwent a most serious alteration, and the next flash through her speculations was a resolution, founded even upon so slight a basis as this, to run down poor Lady Gramm in the colonel's estimation the first moment she could get the

opportunity, Lady Gramm being of an age and size that nobody but such a man as the odious colonel could ever think of incurring. To be sure, there *was* a title, and it seemed as if his anxiety that his daughter should have a title, such as it was, had worked him up into the small ambition of having a wife with a title for himself. But this was malice prepense and aforethought of the butler, who had been utterly discarded from the favour of Mrs. Smylar ever since his unexpected intrusion into the dinner-parlour in quest of sugar-candy, on the memorable evening of Sir George's somewhat unwelcome visit. From that time he felt satisfied that any attempts he might make upon the heart—or rather the hand—of Mrs. Smylar, would be vain: and thenceforth, still affecting all sorts of kindness and civility towards her, he never lost an opportunity, favourable or unfavourable, whenever he could, to excite, if not absolute jealousy, something like an irritable distrust in the conduct of her diurnal report of the colonel's proceedings.

It is not an unpleasant sight to see roguery and duplicity thus thwarted; nor can there

be a life more harassing, or more deservedly uncomfortable, than that of one of the disciples of the Smylar school, who exist upon falsehood and hypocrisy, and whose deviation of one inch to the right or the left from the crooked path of their base and hateful policy, must as inevitably annihilate their hopes, as an incidental tumble of a train off the railway settles the fate of the infatuated passengers by the iron hearses invented for the purpose of cheatery and monopoly, to supersede good old English horses and carriages, and the best roads for travelling in the world.

Whether out of this wheel-within-wheel system—we do not mean of steam travelling, but of domestic intrigue in Colonel Bruff's house—any thing is likely to arise really calculated to destroy the influence of the ringletted Venus of Bullock's-smithy, we are not yet prepared to state; but as far as affairs had yet gone, it certainly was exceeding fortunate that the Grindle family were separated, and that Bruff, no more than Sir George and his eldest son, had any notion of the real state of circumstances.

Leave we for the moment the colonel and

the syren undisturbed, except by the butler's jealousy. Believe we or not his hankering after the aristocratic alliance with the widow of Lord Gramm (all that, as the phrase goes, "will keep"), and let us just look at affairs as they are progressing or likely to progress at the Amershams'.

"Well, Jane," said Emma, when Jane was able to hear the well-known voice she loved so much,—"well, Jane, and so it unfortunately happens that you seem to think Mr. Francis Grindle infinitely more agreeable than his brother George."

"Emma," said Jane, "I have no concealments from you; if in your knowledge of Mr. Francis Grindle's merits and accomplishments, you have found a reason for my not liking his brother, let me ask you, what then? A month ago I did not even know the family. Why—tell me, why—is it necessary I should marry into it, or marry at all?"

"Merely, my dear girl," said Mrs. Amersham, "because your father says you must, and because you are too dutiful to disobey him."

"You misunderstand me, Emma," said Jane. "What I am saying, if I can make myself understood, involves no question of filial obedience. What I mean to ask is, why is it necessary that I should marry, when I would rather remain single? or if it is essential to my father's comfort that I *should* marry, why is it necessary to marry into this particular family?"

"I'm sure I cannot answer that question," answered Mrs. Amersham. "All I know of the matter is, that your father, for reasons best known to himself, commands you to marry one son of Sir George Grindle; and you, as is not in the slightest degree unnatural, choose to marry another, and—"

"My dearest friend," said Jane, interrupting her, "*that* is the very point upon which we differ. Of the two Grindles, I admit I prefer, in every point of view, *your* friend Mr. Frank; but that is not *my* point. Why should I marry one brother because I dislike another?"

"There are many results," said Emma, "in this world, which are perfectly unaccountable. Don't you see, my dear child, if you had

been left alone here, and your dear father had not found out these people, none of this would have happened; but it did happen, and having been introduced to a very disagreeable man (at least by *your* account), whom your father wants you to make your husband, you chanced to fall in with a very agreeable one, whom you yourself wish to marry."

"Me!" said Jane; "I wish to marry nobody. All *I* say is, between the two Grindles, there can be no comparison; but what then? with my father's views and intentions, the simple fact of their being so nearly related has nothing in the world to do with the matter. He would be as much opposed to my marrying Mr. Frank Grindle—even supposing such a thought had ever entered my head—as he would to my marrying a beggar. Emma, Emma, even *you* mistake me. All I ask is, to be relieved from all importunities on the subject of marriage, and—"

"Choose for yourself," interrupted Mrs. Amersham. "That *is* a very agreeable scheme in life, but not always to be worked

out. Ah, Jane, if my gentle hints about that most worthy of men, my friend Miles Blackmore, could have had their effect upon you, all this might have been saved."

"How?" said Jane.

"How?" replied Emma. "Why long before this family of the Grindles became known to your father, we might have made an offer—I say we—but *he* would have made an offer in every point unexceptionable, and one which the colonel could not have failed to accept, with your own sanction and approval."

"What my father might have done in such a case," said Jane, "I cannot of course anticipate; but I do assure you, respecting, esteeming, and regarding with every friendly feeling Mr. Miles Blackmore, I never — never could have accepted him as a husband."

"Was he not tenderly devoted to you, Jane?" asked Mrs. Amersham.

"He did me the kindness of paying me more attention than, with his cultivated talents and general attainments, I perhaps deserved," said Jane.

"Was he ever happy except in your company?" asked Emma.

"I don't know," said Jane, "but he never seemed happy in it."

"That was the surest sign of his affection for you," said Emma; "distrustful of himself, watchful of your thoughts and wishes, his whole mind was absorbed in the consideration of your merits."

"No," said Jane; "if I ever had thought —and please to recollect I never did think— of Mr. Miles Blackmore in the way you imagine, and in which you speak of him, all such thoughts would have been driven from my mind by an abstraction in his, which, whenever we were gayest—whenever in this happy house we were most cheerful, and when I had sung him his favourite song—seemed to overwhelm him, and distract his thoughts from every thing around him. Rely upon it, Emma—I am no great conjuror, nor can I predict or foretell—but rely upon it, there is something weighing upon the mind of Mr. Miles Blackmore, which will some day or other cause a sensation—at least if it ever comes to a disclosure."

"The something weighing on his mind," said Emma, "was his affection for you. However, putting your opinions and feelings upon that point in the same scale with the colonel's determination, and your engagement to be married to another man, it seems useless to talk about that. He is gone—I am perfectly certain driven away by your cruelty, you tyrant—to live in France for some time; and so, *he* being out of the way, all we have to do is to discuss the relative merits of these two Grindles."

"There, Emma, again I must beg to check you," said Jane; "I have over and over again told you that I cannot see the necessity of my marrying into this family, or into any family, being perfectly satisfied as I am; but because you expect Mr. Francis Grindle here, do not imagine that I am about to institute a comparison—"

"Stop, stop, my dear Jane," interrupted Emma, "I do not imagine anything more than I can comprehend. You left town, as you admit, to avoid — as long as circumstances permitted — the attentions of your intended: well; when you were kind enough

to accept our invitation, you knew his brother was to be of the party."

"Well, Emma?" said Jane, looking steadfastly at her friend.

"Now, Jane," said Mrs. Amersham, "did you expressly state to your papa, that your anxiety to come to us, was to get rid of the visits of Mr. George Grindle?"

"Certainly not," said Jane; "the peculiar circumstances of Mr. Leeson's death, rendered it a matter of delicacy that some step of the sort should be taken."

"Very right, dear Jane," said Mrs. Amersham; "and now let me ask you, my love, did you mention to your papa that you expected to meet the brother of Mr. George Grindle here?"

Jane, colouring up, looked at once reproachfully and imploringly at Emma.

"I—I," faltered she.

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Mrs. Amersham, who saw the way in which her shot had told; "there, there, go and dress for dinner, my dear girl, and be sure you put on your best looks, for most likely he will be here, at latest in the evening."

Jane attempted neither reply nor remonstrance, but proceeded to do as her kind and intelligent hostess had directed.

There is one part of the history with which hereabouts the reader ought to be acquainted, inasmuch as it throws some light upon the characters of two persons who take prominent parts in its progress. Although Frank Grindle was expected at the Amershams', and although as *we* know it was Mrs. Amersham's object to bring them together, and although Jane Bruff knew she was to meet him there, Francis Grindle did *not* know that Jane was to be of the family party—Mrs. Amersham having resolved on "getting up" what she called a surprise, hoping upon the principle of killing two birds with one stone, by the suddenness of their meeting, at once, to change the character of his thoughts and feelings, and drive them into another channel. Thus, with the best intentions in the world, she was, as we have already said, working more harm and mischief for both the dear friends about whom she was most interested, than their bitterest enemy could have imagined or contrived.

Jane had been five days at the Amershams', and had of course received George Grindle's elegantly-written epistle, and had not answered it—indeed she scarcely knew what to say—it did not seem to require an answer, or if it did, her literary correspondence with men had been hitherto confined to replies to her father's letters; and after showing the beautiful record of her lover's affections to Emma, who was sufficiently *ill-bred* to laugh at it most immoderately, she determined upon leaving it unreplied to.

"That is my advice," said Mrs. Amersham; "if he is really devoted to you, his anxiety will force him to write again, and then perhaps he may say something intelligible: if he is not sincere, his conceit will take umbrage at your silence, and he will be angry, and so much the better."

When a friend entirely agrees with one, how readily his advice is adopted; and as affronting George Grindle would have essentially aided the success of Emma's well-meant manœuvre, she as gladly gave her opinion as Jane acted upon it.

The next day Mr. Francis Grindle was to

arrive, and there can be no question as to the excitement which his approach produced on Jane: for through the activity of her admirable counsellor in London, who detested her, curiously and unconsciously seconded and supported by her friend in the country, who sincerely loved her, the innocent girl found herself at once disobeying her father's commands, having prevaricated to obtain his leave to do so—affronting the lover to whom that father had actually engaged her—and proposing to meet and live under the same roof with the rival of that accepted lover, who, moreover, was the object of his hatred, and that of her future father-in-law. And all this combination of circumstances was the result of contrivances of others, some devised with the worst, and others with the best intentions.

The day announced for Frank's arrival was a most important and agitating one. It grew late, and Jane's agitation increased. Her attentive maid, Harris, exerted herself to support and sustain her. Jane accounted to her for her nervousness, by mentioning the

real cause—her apprehensions of meeting her future brother-in-law, and might even have gone the length of telling her that she was now almost sorry that she had come to the Amershams' when he was expected. This ingenuous expression of her thoughts was unquestionably injudicious in Jane; but Miss Harris had lived with her for several years, and had been trusted with all such secrets as Jane Bruff with her single-mindedness and simplicity ever had to confide to anybody, and therefore it might not much signify; however, as soon as Jane was dressed for dinner, Miss Harris wrote off an account of each day's proceedings to Mrs. Smylar, including besides the detail of what she had seen, or been told, a report of whatever conversations she had overheard.

The day wore on—dinner was over—no Francis Grindle. Something had occurred to delay him. This procrastination of Jane's anxiety was most painful, and the evident effect it produced upon her manners and conversation, afforded Emma several opportunities for exerting her playful raillery.

The clock was just striking nine, when the sound of wheels announced the approach of a carriage.

"There he is," said Amersham. "I suppose in this civilized age of railroads he couldn't get horses; I dare say, poor fellow, he has had no dinner, or—"

At this moment, when Jane's heart beat infinitely more rapidly than it ought to have done, and Amersham was going forth to receive his visitor, the drawing-room-doors were flung open, and a servant announced in a stentorian voice—

"Lady and Miss Cramly."

The sound of the names, the sight of the people, were at once a shock and relief to poor Jane, and she scarcely knew whether she was standing on her head or her heels: while Lady Cramly bounced into the room and almost smothered Mrs. Amersham with kisses; Seraphine following in her turn, and receiving Emma's salute in the calmest and most approved manner.

"Well, my love," said her ladyship, "here we are—taking you by surprise—a day before we were expected; but, as I said to Sera-

phine, I was sure you wouldn't mind us. And how do *you* do, my dear Mr. Amersham? dear me, how well you are looking—and so like our friend, Count Giginawhisky, —isn't he, Seraphine?"

"Count —?" said Seraphine.

"My dear child!" exclaimed the lady, "don't you remember Giginawhisky — the man who was so exceedingly civil to us at Potsdam—with all those crosses and things, and I said at the time how handsome he was—"

"And so like Mr. Amersham?" said Emma; "upon my word, Lady Cramly, you'll make my poor dear husband more conceited than he is. Allow me to present a very dear friend of mine, Miss Bruff."

"Oh, too happy," said her ladyship; "dear me—well—Seraphine—to be sure I *have* the faculty of discovering likenesses. But Seraphine, isn't this young lady a perfect facsimile of our sweet little princess — dear, dear, what *was* her name?—who lent us her palace at Naples, before we went to the Duke's—I declare at the moment I quite forget—but she was so civil, that the recol-

lection of her charming countenance is perfectly fresh on my mind. I have got her down in my diary."

"Would you like, my dear Lady Cramly," said Mrs. Amersham, "to get rid of your cloak? and you, Seraphine, shall I show you your rooms, as a good hostess should?"

"Have you dined, Lady Cramly?" said Amersham.

"Oh! dined, ages ago," said the lady. "I have got into a habit of early dining; and the people at the inn where we stopped were so immensely civil—of course, they knew me through the servants; but you really never saw such attention—every part of the little town was ransacked for dainties for our table. I never saw in a small English inn any thing like it. Wasn't it charmingly good, Seraphine?"

"Yes, Ma," said Seraphine; "I thought the roast fowl very—"

—"Oh, my dear child, I am not talking of the fowls," almost screamed her ladyship; "however, I *must* say you are one of the smallest possible eaters, and care nothing about it. I'm ready to attend you," added

she, turning to Emma, who accordingly proceeded to marshal the way that she should go.

"That's a lively bird, Jane," said Amersham, when the doors were closed; "you'll have some fun with *her*, and more if you make friends with her quiet little daughter, who is all truth, and lets it out, too, whenever she sees occasion."

"But I suppose they continually quarrel upon these points?" said Jane.

"No," replied Amersham; "the mother generally snubs her child, and cuts her short; but as she bears it patiently, and makes no answer, the affair blows over. By and by, we shall hear why she has come to us a day before we expected her. You must keep your countenance if you can, especially as it is so exceedingly like that of her dear friend the little Princess, whose name she don't recollect."

"She certainly seems an extraordinary person," said Jane.

"I tell you what, Miss Jenny," said Amersham, "if our friend Frank doesn't make his appearance before the post goes out, I shall just trouble him with a line. He

cannot be ill—at least I hope not; but he seems so regular in all his engagements, that I get uneasy about him, being as he is alone, and under circumstances full of grief and vexation. I'll go and write now. Shall I send your love, Jane?"

"I should think not," said Jane.

"What, you mean to keep it for him till he comes," said Mr. Amersham.

"Now really and truly," said Jane, "if you talk in that way, I shall write up to papa—"

"What, to send Sugar and Salt?"

"Yes," said Jane, "and run away home forthwith."

"Well, Jane," said Amersham, "you shan't be worried. However, I'll write. Excuse me for five minutes."

Jane smiled assent, and he proceeded to his room to write and dispatch the "remind;" but her smile soon turned to a thoughtful expression of countenance. She felt that there was too much truth in Amersham's joke to make it agreeable, and was again warned of the perilous part she had been induced to act.

By the same post which would, for a short distance, carry Frank Grindle's letter, the following would be dispatched to London:

"Dear Mrs. Smylar,

"I begin very much to doubt whether it was quite prudent to let Miss Jane come here at the same time with F. G. without the colonel's knowledge. From something she said to-day, I think it not unlikely that she will get frightened, and write and tell her father all about it, and then you will get into a pretty scrape. Think this over; and whether it would not be best to tell him yourself, and say you never knew any thing about F. G.'s coming here till you heard of it from *me*. He is to be here this evening; so now consider; and at all events believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"E. HARRIS."

This letter given (*par parenthèse*) to the reader, will serve still further to illustrate the really perilous position of poor Jane. It may seem strange that people could be found to combine against so much sweetness and

goodness as those of which her mind and character were composed; but Smylar's power was very extraordinary—*she* had her point to carry, her ends to achieve, and if in her progress towards success, she had sufficient ability to dupe and deceive Colonel Bruff and his daughter, both in opposite interests, there can be no doubt that she had sufficient talent to win Miss Harris over to her cause, aiding her plausibility, as she was in the habit of doing, by admitting her to be a participator in the refections of her private apartments. Amersham's letter to Frank Grindle ought to be recorded, for reasons, the cogency of which may be hereafter shown. It ran thus:

"Thursday Evening.

"My dear Sir,

"We have waited and waited for your promised arrival to-day, and are grievously disappointed that you are not come. We sincerely hope that neither illness nor accident detains you. We expect you without fail to-morrow; but as the lateness of the hour at which our post leaves this, affords me the opportunity of writing, pray let us know why

you are not with us this evening, and that you will be here in the course of the day, and above all that you are well; or whether my going over to you would, on any matter of business, be useful or agreeable.

"My wife desires her best regards. We think we can give you some amusement in the society of a lady and her daughter, who are our only visiters, except our very old and dear friend, Jane Bruff.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,

"Faithfully yours,

"E. AMERSHAM."

Before these letters were dispatched; Lady Cramly, Seraphine, Jane, and Amersham, were all again reassembled in the *salon;* and Amersham, who was anxious that Jane should as early as possible understand some of the merits of the new arrivals, began a course of showing them off, which never failed to produce its effect. Wherefore after casting a look at Miss Bruff which she did not perfectly comprehend, and another at his wife, which she perfectly did, he opened the campaign by enquiring of Lady Cramly if she

had stayed any time in Paris. The train he had laid was fired, and off she went.

"Yes," said the lady. "I was there ten or twelve days; quite enough for Paris at this season, although to *me* seasons make no difference. Paris, you know, is France. The spirit of concentration is universal, and certainly out of the capital, one is there out of the world. I, of course, saw every thing and heard every thing. We were *fêted* in the most charming manner. It would have amused you to see me a great lady. I like Thiers very much, because I think him a nice sharp little fellow; and I admire Guizot, he is so gentle and so placid. Well now really you would have fancied me a great diplomatist. There was Guizot talking to me for three-quarters of an hour on the state of England; and *he* had no sooner left me, than Thiers tried to get out of me all the information he could; and although I was cautious, of course, he confessed he understood more of English policy from what I had said to him than he ever knew before. You heard him say so, Seraphine?"

"Why no, Ma'," said Seraphine, "I did not."

"Ah well, child," said her ladyship, "that is because you didn't attend; you had enough to do to talk to your beaux. I never saw a young lady more beset by Parisian dandies than that quiet, modest-looking creature."

"La, Ma'!" said Seraphine.

"Were you much at the Tuilleries?" said Amersham to Lady Cramly, looking sideways at Jane.

"Three or four times," said the lady; "in fact we really were so engaged that we were obliged to shirk a royal command or two. The King was exceedingly gracious. He was very fond of *me* when I was a girl. At that time he was living at Twickenham, and my dear father, who had a beautiful place there, used to send him flowers, flounders, and French-rolls; and I used to call him Phil. I was quite a baby then, but His Majesty recollected me perfectly, and was exceedingly good-natured, and his beautiful family vastly civil. I have jotted it all down in my diary, which you shall read, my dear Mrs. Amersham, before it is published."

"Oh," said Amersham, "you mean to publish again?"

"Why that is not decided upon," replied the lady. "I have had offers from almost all the publishers in London, from my old friend Liberal, of Albemarle-street, down to the house of Sneak and Shuffle, of—I forget where—all at my feet; but the dear Marquis of Nottingham, who was so uncommonly civil to us at Florence, and who is really and truly one of the most charming creatures in the world, and so fond of Seraphine, says that I ought not to be too hasty."

"The power of making tours," said Jane, "must be exceedingly delightful. I have never left England."

"Nor ever will till you are pleased to marry," said Lady Cramly. "When I was of course much younger than I am now, I used to give myself airs, and turn up my nose at half a hundred lovers, and especially at those whom my poor dear papa recommended; but at last I found that, independent as I fancied myself while single, I was the most dependent and helpless creature in the world; so I took the man of my choice. To be sure, he was only a baronet, and that of 1725, but then he was a good, kind creature; and

although he is gone (as I was saying one day to the Pope), the way we must all go, he has left me that dear child, who is indeed a treasure."

Jane and Emma exchanged looks, which Seraphine observed, and most undutifully gave another.

"Did you visit Venice this trip?" said Amersham.

"Venice?" exclaimed the lady. "Why do you think I could ever leave Portman-square without visiting Venice? Why the dear Doge is one of the oldest friends I have. He speaks English wonderfully well, and laughs ready to kill himself when I call him playfully, in *my* way, 'my Old Doggy.' He is a capital fellow, isn't he, Seraphine?"

"Very agreeable indeed, Ma'," said Seraphine.

"Do you sing much now, Seraphine?" said Mrs. Amersham, wishing to throw a chance of joining in the conversation into the poor girl's hands, and, at the same time, to prevent her husband from carrying his exhibition of her mother's absurdities to too great an extent.

"Sometimes," said Seraphine, gently.

"Sometimes!" said Lady Cramly; "that is remarkably modest. Why, my dear Mrs. Amersham, her singing is the cause of our being here to-day, instead of to-morrow."

"La, Ma'!" said Seraphine.

"Perhaps you don't know it," said her mother, "but so it is. If we had staid over to-day at Lord Castlemount's we should have met the Duke of Rochester; and Lord Castlemount told *me* that if his Royal Highness had heard Seraphine sing, he would have invited us to stay with him at Fitzroy-park; and if his Royal Highness had done so, it would of course have been a command, and we must have gone; which to me, Mrs. Amersham, who love our royal family with a loyalty derived from my dear father, would have been both an honour and a pleasure; but as we had promised *you* for to-morrow, I thought it best to get away to-day, for fear we should have been kept a week or two."

Here Jane and Amersham exchanged looks, so did Mrs. Amersham and Seraphine.

How much further this particular conversation, with its accompanying glances, and

counter-glances, might have gone on, we cannot say; but just as Lady Cramly was beginning a history of having driven herself up Vesuvius in a London-built tilbury, the butler came to announce that the usual social and sociable meal of the Amershams—supper—was ready; and in spite of the splendid and magnificent banquet which had been prepared by the inhabitants of Slushpool for her ladyship's dinner at the Magpie and Stump in that beautiful village, she "nothing loth," accepted the proffered arm of her host, and they led the way to the round table long since commemorated in our annals.

END OF VOL. II.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.

00088988

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016